



# DE GAULLE AND THE COMING INVASION of GERMANY

by JAMES MARLOW

● The fallacy of preparedness for defense alone is here brilliantly exploded by General de Gaulle whose ideas of mechanized and motorized warfare, scorned by the French General Staff, were seized upon and used against his own country by Hitler's Germany. A powerful brief for carrying the present war, once technical superiority is achieved, into the heart of Nazidom. A fighting book for all Americans who want no false Maginot Line of defense between democracy and dictatorship.

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DE GAULLE  
AND THE COMING INVASION  
OF  
GERMANY



GENERAL DE GAULLE  
Leader of the Army of All Free Frenchmen

DE GAULLE  
AND  
THE COMING INVASION  
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By  
JAMES MARLOW



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## FOREWORD

The Nazi war is over a year old.

The world has learned many bitter lessons during the first year, and they have cost disastrously in men, material and territory. It is not enough that we should profit by the lessons of the past: *we must anticipate* and plan boldly for the future.

In the past the Allies have neglected the mechanical side of war, or at any rate they have utterly failed to grasp its overwhelming importance on land. The result, for France, as we know, has been a temporary eclipse.

And yet the warning has been sounded in our ears for many years by, among others, a distinguished French soldier—General Charles de Gaulle—who has constantly lifted up his voice and spoken of the growing menace of the German mechanised army. His words and his writings were ignored and it is only recently that military authorities throughout the world have unanimously realised how right he has been.

This book is intended to be an appreciation of General de Gaulle himself and to project, from the lessons of the General's own books and statements, the manner in which final victory will come—*with the invasion of Germany*.

*The Author*

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DE GAULLE  
AND THE COMING INVASION  
OF  
GERMANY

## CHAPTER I

### INVADE GERMANY

The time has come for us to change our ideas concerning the future conduct of the war.

When the Germans began invading one neutral country after another, our considerations of home defence were coupled with plans of action for driving them out, back to beyond the borders of their own country; and many people gave their thought free run in the direction of carrying the war into Germany itself. For war-time it was a robust state of mind.

The sequence of tragic events on the Continent, culminating in the pitiful and amazing capitulation of the French Government, compelled us all in Britain to concentrate our thoughts on the single purpose of safeguarding these islands from a similar fate. That was all to the good. With the enemy in possession of all the ports on the western seaboard of Europe, from the Arctic region of Norway to the Spanish frontier in the Bay of Biscay, Britain's position became as vulnerable as ever it had been in the course of history. The immediate task was to make our country impregnable.

Government and people set to this task with a resolution and a vigour that will command the admiration of posterity. Late in making the start, and not without a few initial blunders, this peaceful country has been transformed into a stout island fortress, capable of repelling any assaults of the enemy. Indeed, it has already been put to the test, and has come through each ordeal triumphantly. Successive visits of

Nazi bombers have proved to be extremely costly to the attackers without diminishing this country's defensive strength and, thanks to the efficiency of A.R.P., with relatively little loss of civilian lives. The results of these repeated attacks by air warrant the confidence of the public in the country's defences.

This concentration of thought and energy on defensive measures has, however, induced a tendency to think of British war activities almost exclusively in terms of keeping the enemy from these shores. With many people, in fact, "The Invasion of Britain" has become a preoccupation beyond which they seem unable mentally to advance. This fixity of thought has even affected some of the sanest of the national newspapers which, in common opinion, would be the last to suffer from mental paralysis. There was, for instance, a recent case where one of these journals, with a proud reputation for never publishing anything misleading, headed a report "Invasion Inevitable," quoted as being the opinion of a Minister of State, whereas the Minister in question merely stated that, to his mind, *attempts* at invasion were inevitable, whilst the rest of his speech went to show that such attempts would prove abortive.

This obsession must be removed. For a time, intense concentration on the sole purpose of making our homeland safe against all attacks of the ruthless aggressors was the most necessary and the most urgent of all national duties. It is still a supreme national duty to maintain that security and integrity and to be ever vigilant in detecting flaws in the defensive system through which the enemy might strike a serious, if not a mortal, blow.

The preservation of Britain, its democratic institutions and its fine tradition of freedom is, indeed, much more than a national duty. It is essential to the preservation of civilisation itself. We cannot expect to save the world for democracy unless we first make sure of saving

Britain for ourselves. But, now that a stage has been reached where one may reasonably reckon on successfully withstanding no matter what onslaughts the Germans may make upon this country, it is, to say the least, weakness to think only defensively.

The successful defence of Britain against all the attacks of the enemy will not of itself win the war. It will not restore independence to the unfortunate peoples enslaved under the Nazi tyranny. It will not provide security to any neutral country against the menace of rule by brute force in place of justice. It will not save the world for the civilised principles of democracy. It will not even save Britain against future dangers and wars. At best it can provide only a respite.

That view does not in any way detract from the value of the present defensive actions or from the effectiveness of the British blockade of Germany and of those countries occupied by the German forces. The repeated victories of British fighters over the German aircraft have exceeded all expectations, and alone suffice to give confidence in an ultimate British supremacy in the air. But it may possibly be a long process.

In a statement in the House of Commons on August 20, 1940, the Prime Minister, comparing our aircraft production with that of the enemy, said: "Our new production already, I am advised, largely exceeds his, and American production is only just beginning to flow in." German production is reckoned, on good authority, to be between fifty and seventy planes a day. Optimists like to argue that Germany cannot turn out that same number of well-trained pilots every day. One must not be too sure about that. In the sphere of war preparations the Nazis have accomplished some truly amazing things and, with their firm belief in the modernisation of warfare, they may have planned for the training of many tens of thousands of fresh pilots every year. Sufficient young man-power is there, and since in Nazi

Germany military training is regarded as the way to the highest virtues of manhood, it would be surprising if the tyrants in power have not provided the machinery to cope with mass training for flying.

Much, therefore, as one rejoices in the splendid exploits of British airmen and their truly glorious victories over the Germans attacking this country, it has to be recognised that even if these victories are repeated day after day on the same grand scale, it may yet be a very considerable time before Germany is weakened sufficiently to think of yielding.

As for the blockade, it may be taken for granted that although there will surely be a growing shortage of foodstuffs and of raw materials for industrial production in Germany and in the countries under the Nazi rule, the Germans will see to it that they themselves will be the last to suffer seriously from the effects of this economic warfare.

In planning to bring Hitler to his knees it has to be remembered that he has a vast army of some 7,000,000 well-trained men at his disposal. This army is highly mechanised, as other nations know to their cost. It would not be in the tradition of the German High Command to let this efficient military host deteriorate. A large proportion of it is employed in controlling the people in the countries now subjected to Nazi domination. Most of it is, however, still in Germany, kept under a rigid discipline and ready at any moment to march to battle. Every month the number is being further swollen by raw recruits and, in the present stage of the war, there is no diminishing of that colossal army by losses in fighting.

Whilst that great army remains intact, Germany has reason for feeling strong. And whilst she feels strong—stronger, indeed, than any other nation—there is no solid ground for assuming that the Nazi rulers will plead for peace, even though their navy lies at the bottom of the sea, though their air force is beaten again and again, and although

the economic strain reduces the people to most terrible privations.

War-thinking in Britain must henceforward extend its field. The nation is one in its resolution to win the final victory. It must think in the direction in which that victory can be achieved. Victory will not come by sitting still at home and keeping the Germans out. It will come only by striking blows at that vast army that prides itself on having never yet been conquered. It must be conquered. The blow may be struck in one or some of the countries which the Germans have overridden. It may be struck in Germany itself. That would be the most effective blow of all, for once the German people realised that something had happened to them which they had regarded as inconceivable, their faith in the *Allmacht* of Hitler and in the invincibility of his armoured hordes would be shattered beyond repair, with a consequent demoralisation that would smooth the way to victory for the forces of freedom.

“The Invasion of Britain” has served its purpose. It impelled us to unprecedented action. It has resulted in measures which, we firmly believe, will make a serious invasion of this country impossible. That line of thinking will still keep us alert in defence of our beloved country. In that respect we shall not fail.

“The Invasion of Germany” must now be the line of our thinking. It is the line to victory. Forward! is the watchword of the new day.

## CHAPTER II

### PREPARE NOW

The course taken by the war during the first year has made the possibility of an invasion of Germany seem more and more remote. At the beginning of hostilities most British people entertained hopes that the conflict, apart from expected air-raids, would be kept far from their own cities, and many people dreamed of an uprising of the liberal elements in Germany, and of British and French forces crossing the Rhine to help in the overthrow of Hitler and his Nazi tyranny. As the months went by, however, one disappointment followed another; each disaster was eclipsed by a worse one. When, at last, the unthinkable happened and France lay prostrate at the feet of her German invaders, Britain awakened rudely to the stern reality of the times and hustled to put her own land in strong defensive order. This one thought, and this one almost alone, inspired us and restricted our action to measures designed to keeping the enemy away from Britain or, if he landed, to driving him out again.

The position has, admittedly, not yet changed in a degree which warrants a sense of complete security. In spite of the herculean efforts to make this island bristle with defence, the menace of a German invasion has not yet been dispelled. In these circumstances, it may well be asked, what ground has one for encouraging thoughts about an invasion of Germany?

There are several reasons which may be put forward to justify the habit of thinking about aggressive action against the Germans in their

own land. It may first of all be observed that, if publicity of this offensive policy were considered by the British Government to be in any way detrimental to the present efforts towards establishing a truly effectual defence, steps would soon be taken to stop such publicity. There has, so far, been no indication whatever that the Government desires the people to think of the war only as one to defend our own country.

In recent weeks there have, indeed, been several instances of members of the Government actually giving a lead in this new offensive direction. That is significant especially in view of the fact that, since the tragic complacency of the former Government in the earlier stages of the war, those in authority have been extremely cautious not to stir up false hopes and have, if anything, erred in the other directions. When, therefore, two or three Ministers and even the Prime Minister himself make utterances which convey hints of a coming invasion of Germany it is legitimate to deduce that preparations for such an offensive are being made and on a scale beyond that suggested by the ministerial observations.

One of the first of British Ministers to make reference to a coming offensive was Mr. Anthony Eden, Secretary of State for War. In a broadcast on August 14th, 1940 he said that superior sea and air power, combined with an ever-increasing army, would secure our victory. The proper use of this power for striking the enemy in each of those spheres was the way that we should win the war. For us, he continued, the real war, in which the British Empire would put forward the whole of its strength, had hardly begun. For us the real war would begin when we took the offensive and struck home at the enemy. That was the way wars were won and that was what we meant to do. Further in his address he referred to the epic exploits of the Navy and the Air Force and said that the Field Army at home had watched with

admiration their deeds and those of all three Services in the Middle East. Now, maybe one day soon, it would be the turn of the army at home . . . but we had our own opinion as to our capability to hold out, and not merely to hold out but to strike out. . . . When the time came for us to strike out we should not be alone. Then, the Foreign Legions, now forming in our midst, small in numbers but great in heart, would be swollen into a multitude of men demanding their freedom and going out sword in hand to recover it.

Mr. Herbert Morrison, Minister of Supply, was still more direct in his allusion to the coming offensive. Speaking on August 19th, 1940 on the position of supplies, in which he said that, although everything was not yet fully satisfactory, sufficient weapons had been put into the hands of the Army to enable it to perform its immediate task successfully, he made the following plain statement on future policy:

“I can assure you that those of us who are responsible for equipping the British forces are not stopping at the thought of defence. The ground plan of our future production activity is drawn on the assumption that our task will be a world offensive when the moment comes.

“Once the immediate peril of these next few days or weeks has passed we shall all of us together be able to look forwards to a steadily mounting tally of armed might and striking power.”

More guarded, though no less significant, was Mr. Churchill’s observation in the House of Commons on August 20th. During the course of his comprehensive review of the war situation he gave an indication of Britain’s preparations for coming offensive action which could only be interpreted as meaning that plans are forming in his mind for an invasion of Germany. After stressing this country’s intention to continue the process of bombing the military industries and communications of Germany and the air bases from which Britain is

attacked, and declaring that this air offensive action would be on an ever-increasing scale and might, in another year, attain dimensions hitherto undreamed of, since that was one of the surest roads to victory, he made the following most encouraging statement on the future prosecution of the war:

“Our offensive springs are being slowly compressed, and we must resolutely and methodically prepare ourselves for the campaigns of 1941 and 1942. Many opportunities may lie open to an amphibian power, and we must be ready to take advantage of them.

“The road to victory may not be so long as we expect. But we have no right to count on this. Be it short or long, rough or smooth, we mean to reach our journey’s end.”

Those serious statements by Ministers of the British Government would of themselves be sufficient to create and encourage a belief in the coming invasion of Germany. Their importance is enhanced when they are found to be endorsed by a very high military opinion; or, it might be better said, when those statements are the endorsement of the highest military opinion on that particular subject.

Among the military thinkers of the present age, General de Gaulle, who is creating the Army of All Free Frenchmen, has rightly come to be regarded as one of the greatest, if not the greatest, of exponents of modern warfare with highly technical and mechanised forces.

De Gaulle is forming his new Army of Frenchmen from all parts of the world, to unite with him in fighting the aggressor. He and his Free Frenchmen can succeed only if they fight. But one of the conditions of this alliance of Frenchmen with the British forces is that the Free Frenchmen will never be called upon to fight against their compatriots in France. In other words, they are to fight in Germany or German controlled territory.

Quite apart, then, from any direct declaration by General de Gaulle

(which will be included in later pages), it may be taken for granted that the Armies of All Free Frenchmen believe in the feasibility of an invasion of Germany and are actively preparing themselves to take part in that great ordeal.

In stressing the importance of General de Gaulle's views on an invasion of Germany there is neither an attempt nor a desire to detract from the great significance of the opinions expressed by members of the British Government or from the opinions and plans of the British military leaders. On the contrary, it is assumed that the British political and military authorities are inspired with the same progressive spirit and are steadily, and as quickly as means permit, making full preparations against the time when the war will be carried into Hitler's own territory. But de Gaulle has been placed in a unique position by the events of the war itself, which have only confirmed him in his acknowledged position as the prototype of the most modern military mind and as the symbol of the scientific military offensive.

There is another big reason why faith in de Gaulle and in his opinions may be justified. It has already been said that he, almost alone, was the French military leader who has been proved throughout the war to be right. If Paul Reynaud had remained longer as Premier of France, and intrigues and defeatism had not elevated to supreme power in France the generals of the last war and their out-worn notions, it might have been de Gaulle, and not Weygand or Pétain, who would have been Generalissimo of the French Armies. There are few today who would not agree that the history of the past few months would then have taken a happier turn. General de Gaulle, it is safe to prophesy, will yet play one of the most decisive roles in the grand struggle yet to come for the final victory of the democratic forces.

This book makes no attempt to deal with the technicalities of modern warfare, nor is it desirable to give a description of an imaginative

descent of Allied forces upon Germany. Its object is to urge the necessity of getting right away from ancient warfare and of living and thinking in the present, seizing every one of the latest developments of science and invention which can serve the military purpose of anticipating the morrow and of securing victory, and securing it as quickly as possible.

It will be useful, first of all, to let readers know more about General de Gaulle and his outlook and work than they have been able to gather from the newspapers. It will then be opportune, in later pages, to publish for the first time a statement made by General de Gaulle to the author of this book on the direct question of the coming invasion of Germany—an utterance which may rank among the most important pronouncements of policy in the present war against Nazi Germany.

## CHAPTER III

### GENERAL DE GAULLE

The reader of this book may legitimately ask why the author has such faith in General de Gaulle—the man and his opinions—as to justify the contention that an invasion of Germany is possible and should be undertaken.

Who is de Gaulle, General de Gaulle? Who is this man whose name has flashed around the earth and who has become a world figure in a few short weeks—weeks overflowing with the most poignant tragedies in the world's history?

The public in different countries know something of General de Gaulle from reports in newspapers of recent issue. It is, for instance, known generally that he is the supreme leader of the Army of All Free Frenchmen. If more were known of him it would be universally accepted that General de Gaulle is the Man of Destiny who will not only galvanise the new France into action, but will play one of the most important parts in the final overthrow of the Nazis and in the restoration to independence of those countries which have become fettered to the Nazi tyranny. He will be one of the great and inspiring leaders in the crusade to re-establish a free world.

France, in all her agonies through the centuries, has never failed to throw up from her own soil and inherent genius a national saviour. The sincere modesty of General de Gaulle would prevent him from claiming such a historic role for himself, and he would feel uneasy to know that it is being claimed for him. But those who know him inti-

mately or who know much about him do not hesitate to express this conviction. It is not only that he is well equipped with a wide scientific education, profound military knowledge, physical and moral courage, and, above everything, an all-encompassing love of his country and of his fellowmen; there is something in him, difficult to define, which men call greatness.

Three recent episodes of his life single him out among the great men of history, even if nothing more was known of him and he had done nothing else.

Before and at the outbreak of the present war he wrestled behind the scenes with the political and military leaders of France for the introduction of the modern mechanised form of armament. Thrust aside at every turn, General de Gaulle never for a moment relaxed his efforts to convince those in power above him that this form of armament, which the Germans were to use so devastatingly against his own country, was the only one by which France could be saved from the ever-increasing might of the Germans. The struggle came to a climax in his submitting to General Gamelin in January 1940 his memorandum, entitled "The Advent of Mechanised Force," pointing out the absolute inevitability of this war being ultimately decided by mechanised troops. The important points of this famous memorandum will be found in the next chapter.

Taking a strong stand against the weakness of character and political prejudices of Pétain and Weygand, of the Baudouins and of the Lavals, when things began to go very badly for France, General de Gaulle sensed the blackness and terror, as of the plague, which were about to descend on his unhappy, strife-torn and bleeding country. A lone hand, he fought and scourged the Baudouin-Laval clique as miserable, self-seeking defeatists. To the very last day he held on his course undismayed. There could be no German iron heel for him, no

collusion in the simperings of the cringing men of Vichy. Great Britain and the mighty British Empire were yet his Allies, the Allies still of millions of Frenchmen rendered inarticulate by their make-shift Government. He chose honour, love of and faith in his country, and faith, too, in the ultimate victory of the cause of freedom throughout the world, in preference to mere obedience to the self-elected political leaders in power above him. Through many vicissitudes and great danger he escaped to London, arriving there on Monday, June 17.

Warmly received by Mr. Churchill, the British Prime Minister, on his arrival, General de Gaulle immediately set to work to create a new army for France to fight alongside the British Allies to whom his country was solemnly pledged—the Army of All Free Frenchmen. He has stood faithful to a great cause and inaugurated a mighty crusade, which has been recognised by, and has received the blessing of the British Government.

More will be told in these pages about those three episodes in the General's life. Something, too, needs to be related of the man and his work, about which the world public has so far learned but little. Such knowledge may, indeed, induce the world public to share the opinions of those who know him better, as to the real importance of General de Gaulle in this historic struggle between free democracies and despotisms. It may also provide good reason for urging a line of thinking in the direction of an invasion of Germany.

General Charles de Gaulle is, as so many great Frenchmen have been, a native of Northern France. He was born at Lille on November 22, 1890, his parents being typical representatives of the French professional class. His father was for many years Professor of Philosophy and French Literature at the famous College in the Rue de Vaugirard in Paris.

After the usual school and university courses of study pursued by all Frenchmen of education, he passed in 1910 with honours into the Military Academy of Saint-Cyr, which corresponds to the English Sandhurst. Passing out of Saint-Cyr, he was granted a commission in the 33rd Infantry Regiment, the commanding officer of which was none other than Colonel, now Marshal, Pétain.

As lieutenant and company commander he displayed great courage and efficiency in the Great War, in the course of which he was wounded three times, severely on the last occasion, at Douaumont, the historic Verdun fort, by a shell-splinter. He was then taken prisoner by a German patrol and, after spending a short time in a German Field Ambulance, was transferred to the hospital of a Prisoners-of-War Camp. He attempted to escape no fewer than five times, but was recaptured every time and subjected to the severest penalties.

He was released at the Armistice, and, in spite of suffering badly from his wounds and hardships, he resumed his military career and played an important part as captain and later as major, during the 1920-21 Anti-Bolshevik campaign in Poland, under General Weygand. He was subsequently appointed Professor of Military History at his old Academy of Saint-Cyr, where he attracted the attention of his superior officers by his highly successful teaching of the cadets. In consequence of this he was sent to the École de Guerre, corresponding to the Staff College in England, and here again his career was bound up with the life of Marshal Pétain, to whom he was appointed A.D.C. during the latter's activities as Commander-in-Chief of the French Armies until 1927.

In that year, in accordance with the rigid rules of the French Army concerning the length of time an officer is allowed to remain on the Staff, he returned to regimental duty and was given command of a battalion of "Chasseurs à Pied," corresponding to our Light Infan-

try, and was sent to Treves in the Rhineland. Two years later he returned to the Staff and traveled extensively through Iraq, Persia and Egypt on behalf of the French Government. Returning to France in 1932, he was appointed General Secretary of the Committee of National Defence, occupying that post until 1936. After a further course at the Centre for Advanced Military Studies, he was given, in 1937, command of the 507th Regiment of Tanks, from which he rose, in 1939, to the command of the Brigade of Tanks attached to the 5th Lorraine Army, with the rank of colonel.

On May 15, 1940, he was given his stars as *Général de Brigade* and took command of the 4th Armoured Division, which was to go into action with such great distinction at Laon during the battles of May 16-19, and in the neighbourhood of Abbeville on May 30 and 31. It has been recorded by several expert observers that during the later battle this Armoured Division played a most important part and launched several counter-attacks, which were the only successful moves made by the French Armies in that district after May 10.

Finally, on June 6, he received an urgent call, by a messenger who reached him at midnight, to go to Paris. He immediately dashed back to Paris by road, and was received at dawn by Premier Paul Reynaud, who appointed him Under Secretary of State for National Defence and War.

Of splendid physique, General de Gaulle is typical of all that was best in that magnificent French Army which British soldiers knew so well in victory and adversity.

In a mahogany-panelled room at his temporary General Headquarters, 4, Carlton Gardens, London, a handsome new building raised on the site of the home of, among other distinguished men, Lord Palmerston and Lord Balfour, General de Gaulle is easy to approach. To intelligent questions he has an immediate, incisive and

generally illuminating reply. His speech is deliberate and resonant. Normally unemotional, his features light up when he speaks of his beloved France, but his eyes betray his emotion when he outlines his plans for the smashing of the swashbuckling Nazi conqueror and the purification and rehabilitation of his country.

The General's faith and purpose are as simple as his language. His declaration of them may be given as follows:

I am a free Frenchman, believing in God and the destiny of my country, owing allegiance to no man.

I am concerned with one thing and one thing alone—to carry on the fight for the freedom of France.

I solemnly declare that I am neither connected with, nor committed to, any political party or politician whatsoever, whether of the Right, Centre or the Left (that is, Conservative, Liberal or Socialist).

## CHAPTER IV

### FRANCE WAS TOLD

It is curious now, after the tragic event, to reflect how the fate of France hung on such a slender thread as the choice between two types of mind in the higher French military circles. For many years previous to the outbreak of the war there had been a continuous struggle between the modernists and the traditionalists, and when war actually broke out the men with modern ideas were thrust into and kept in the background, whilst those with worn-out ideas were placed in supreme control of their country's destiny.

It is surely not too much to say that had General (then Colonel) de Gaulle and men of like thinking been at the head of the French Army when war broke out in September 1939, history would not have had to record such an unhappy fate for France a year later.

General de Gaulle was an acknowledged expert on military science, not only in France, but in military circles throughout the world. Monsieur Reynaud was among those who were deeply impressed by the theories expounded by de Gaulle and by the General's foresight and sound judgment. In "La France Militaire," which Reynaud published in 1937, he paid the highest tribute to the General as a world authority on mechanisation in warfare. De Gaulle, he said, had consistently preached that a revolution in war technique had been brought about by machinery and that success in the future could only be achieved by *big armoured engines possessed of great manoeuvring ability*. When M. Reynaud became War Premier at the end of May

1940, his book was reprinted, and enjoyed very wide publicity in France.

It was Reynaud, furthermore, who boldly proclaimed that General de Gaulle's work "Vers l'Armée de Métier" ("Towards the Professional Army") had prompted the German High Command to depart from the general European system of medium tanks and stealthily to build those giants which ultimately rolled flat the fair face of France, leaving rivers of blood, woe and tears in place of the storied roses of Picardy.

That was no wild assertion. It is now known that General Guderian, Chief of all the German tanks corps, fully endorsed General de Gaulle's theories and put them into practice at the first opportunity. When the Germans burst into Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg and dashed at astonishing speed into France, their operation of giant tanks as the spearhead of infiltration was exactly as de Gaulle had consistently prophesied.

In his writings, his utterances, and in his conversations with his superiors over a period of nearly six years, General de Gaulle earnestly pleaded for the adoption of that form of armament which was eventually to be used by the enemy with such disastrous effects to shatter France.

On this subject de Gaulle was surely entitled to speak with authority. Yet his theories and forecasts were disregarded, if not actually derided, for they ran absolutely counter to what has been described as the Gamelin policy of static defence, to which the French military authorities were so stubbornly wedded, but which was so rapidly converted by the Germans into one of ridicule.

Brief mention has already been made in Chapter III of the memorandum entitled "The Advent of Mechanised Force" which General de Gaulle felt impelled to submit to the head of the French military

authorities in January 1940. General Gamelin and most of the elderly generals to whom the fate of the French Armies had been so unfortunately entrusted, no doubt regarded de Gaulle as a crank with tanks on the brain. They did not believe that any tank that it was possible for man to conceive could ever stand up against the withering fire and the traps of the Maginot Line, neither did they think it possible for any mechanised force of their own to break through the Siegfried Line. So General de Gaulle's memorandum, which, if carefully studied and acted upon, might have saved France, found its way unread or, at most, but casually glanced at, into the waste-paper basket or the incinerator.

A few extracts from this unpublished memorandum will suffice to show how truly prophetic was this real *cri du coeur* of General de Gaulle.

“To all intents and purposes,” he wrote, “we are still employing the manoeuvring system which Carnot and Napoleon had invented at the time when muskets fired 2 rounds a minute at a range of 200 yards and cannons 60 rounds an hour at a range of half-a-mile, but which had practically lost its offensive capacity in the inferno of modern battle.

“Actually, experiences of the War of 1914-1918 already foreshadowed this kind of impotence of the mass system. No sooner had the front been established from Switzerland to the North Sea than, for four years, the strongest armies of the world fell upon one another in frenzied battles, at the cost of huge losses and colossal expenditure of munitions, without succeeding in making any appreciable advance over the territory

“No doubt, in the spring of 1918, thanks to an avalanche of heavy shells, the Germans had succeeded, in the neighbourhood of Mont-

didier, Cassel and Château-Thierry, in penetrating fairly deeply into the British and French lines. But, in no sector were their Divisions, composed of Infantry and Artillery able to develop their successes.

“No doubt, also, during the following summer and autumn, Foch, having at his disposal enormously superior material, managed to thrust the enemy back. But this progress, slow as it was—an average of about 600 yards a day—was only made possible by the intervention of entirely new engines of warfare: Tanks. Indeed, it was not until after the Armistice that the German Army was definitely broken. In short, one had to admit an appalling disproportion between the losses suffered by the nation-in-arms and the tactical, strategic and political results which this system was able to procure.”

Speaking of the unmechanised forces sitting glaring at each other, figuratively, from the Maginot and Siegfried Lines, he says: “Actually, unless it has an immeasurable superiority over its enemy, the present military instrument has but one chance, namely, that of the defensive. From the very beginning, it was quite certain that neither one nor the other of the opponents, facing each other on the Western front, would undertake to have its male population butchered in attacks on the model of Verdun. . . .

“It is a fact that machines are intrinsically endowed with power, mobility and protection which are literally incomparable to other arms and, in consequence, they constitute the essential weapon for manoeuvring, surprise and attack. In modern warfare, active operations can only be carried out by means of mechanical force.”

Even in January 1940 the French General Staff were in ignorance of what was being prepared for them behind the German lines. Or perhaps they ignored it? Indeed, even General de Gaulle observes:

“Both sides possess, it is true, aeroplanes and tanks, but in such

small number and of such low power and so limited by the rules laid down for their employment that they would not even be able to break through the organised enemy defences."

But, on the other hand, he foresaw what would eventually happen:

"The insufficient number of aircraft and the light tanks which the Reich is actually capable of putting into the line would not suffice to break down French resistance if they were directed against the force and obstacles of the Maginot Line. There is, however, every reason to suppose that Hitler's Government bitterly regrets today that it did not make a much more revolutionary change in its Army. No one can reasonably doubt that if Germany had, on September 1st last, possessed only twice as many aeroplanes, a thousand 100-ton tanks, three hundred 50- or 30-ton tanks and six thousand of 20 or 10 tons, she would have crushed France."

That General de Gaulle does not pin much faith on the static conditions imposed on an army in prepared fortifications is shown by the following passage:

"To tell the truth, the system of the nation-in-arms which by itself only allows of strictly defensive action, has been able, until the present conflict, to justify itself by the argument that France is a peaceful country for whom the whole problem of war consists in safeguarding her territory. In fact, that is the sole object at which the basic laws of 1927 and 1928 aimed in the military organisation of the country.

"On condition that we took no interest in what happened to the rest of the world, it would, *a priori*, be conceivable that we should limit our effort to that of manning our fortifications. By keeping our active population motionless under arms, by burying the whole future of France in concrete, by emptying our towns and villages of their inhabitants, in order to protect them, by adopting once for all the strategy which consists of suffering blows without returning

them, we might be able to retain such and such a line of frontier for a longer or shorter period. But the result is bound to be precarious. . . .

“We must, indeed, face the fact that the Maginot Line, however many reinforcements it may have received and may receive, whatever quantity of infantry and artillery occupy it or support it, is capable of being broken. Moreover, in the long run, that is the fate reserved for all fortifications. In this particular case it happens that the appropriate means of attack virtually exists. Technicians and industry are now able to produce tanks which, employed in mass formation as they must be, would be capable of climbing over our active and passive defences. It is merely a question of armour-plating, armament and crossing-power, all of which merely depend upon their being given the appropriate tonnage.”

The situation is summed up as follows:

“The defender who limits himself to resisting in a fixed position with antiquated weapons is doomed to disaster. To break down mechanised force only mechanised force can really be efficacious. Massed air and land counter-attacks launched against an adversary more or less disorganised by his fortifications being pierced is the indispensable recourse of modern defence. Even if we make the frontier of our country the most advanced limit of our military action, we are still absolutely bound to create an instrument of shock, manoeuvre and speed. . . .

“In the present conflict, as in all those that have preceded it, to be inactive is to be beaten. In order that we should be in a position to act and not only to remain passive, we must create a new instrument. Mechanised power, whether terrestrial, aerial or naval, would enable us to preserve ourselves from future attacks from Germany, to seize her strongholds and bases, to expel her from the regions which she has already or shall have captured, to blockade her, bombard her; in

fact, to drive all our weapons into her vitals from every side."

It must not be forgotten that England, too, had her warning of the terrible danger of being without an adequate striking force, either in the air or on the ground.

Most powerfully and persistently, Mr. Winston Churchill pointed out the impending consequences of what has often been described as nothing less than wilful and criminal negligence.

In the British Press, Lord Rothermere and Lord Beaverbrook attacked the apathy and downright laziness of the political hierarchy of the time.

"We need 5,000 war 'planes," said Lord Rothermere as far back as November 1933. While upholding his arguments, with tenacity and knowledge of facts, in his newspapers till the outbreak of War, he increased the number to 10,000.

As a spur to the Air Council of that day, Lord Rothermere had prepared, at his own personal expense, specifications for the finest and fastest fighter-bomber in the world. This was built (the "Britain First"); it became the prototype of the famous Blenheim, admitted the best of its type in existence. It was accepted as a free gift to the nation.

Lord Beaverbrook, doggedly, day in day out in his newspapers, clamoured, "Prepare, *Prepare*, PREPARE!" At the same time as he preached isolation and peace, he urged everything that would make for unassailable strength within the Empire. These sensible and far-sighted cries for more and more modern armaments, however, made little or no impression upon the unheeding and somnolent politicians in power.

## CHAPTER V

### THE MAGINOT LINE

General de Gaulle's warning, conveyed in his memorandum to the French High Command, was received with complete indifference. It was not as though he was an unknown officer whose action in approaching his superiors on this subject might be regarded as impudent. General de Gaulle had already made many valuable contributions to the military literature of the past ten years, his books being accepted as classical works on the subject nearest to his heart, namely, that of a mechanised army of specialists.

Apart from his numerous articles, speeches and lectures, there are three major works from his pen: "Au Fil de l'Epée," published in 1932, "Vers l'Armée de Métier," published in 1934, and "La France et son Armée," published in 1939. Of these, the best known and most widely studied is the second, "Towards a Professional Army." This was acknowledged on all sides at the time of its publication, even by the Germans, as being the most important work on the subject that had yet appeared. Indeed, the German High Command itself admitted the debt that modern warfare owed to General de Gaulle's keen insight into modern and future war conditions.

That famous memorandum was not the only warning which the heads of the French Army and Government had received. It was really a repetition of similar warnings previously made in General de Gaulle's books which were known to everybody who studied military science. But the French rulers and Army leaders, who have been stig-

matised as "the old men of Vichy," would not listen to the young colonel (as de Gaulle then was) and his revolutionary ideas.

Generals Gamelin and Weygand had all their ideas deeply rooted in the system of trench warfare through which the Allies conquered in the last war. These generals of the former "War to End Wars" seemed deliberately to blind themselves to the fact that the modern aeroplane is as far removed from the aeroplane of 1914 as was the aeroplane of 1914 from Montgolfier's eighteenth-century balloon. They did not realise that the modern tank, careering across the country at anything up to 50 miles per hour and weighing anything up to 70 tons, is as far removed from those gallant little tanks of 1916 as is the modern battle-ship from one of Nelson's "ships of the line."

Unfortunately, it was left to the Germans alone to exploit General de Gaulle's idea, and it is now a melancholy thought that it was a French General who invented the tactics by which the Germans crushed the French Army in France. When, at the height of the tragedy, the Germans' mechanised forces rolled over the French Army, those men of the Vichy Government who had any conscience must have heard General de Gaulle's warnings ringing in their ears like a frantic and despairing appeal to common-sense.

To get a clear idea of General de Gaulle's attitude towards modern warfare and towards the hereditary enemy of France, a few quotations from "*L'Armée de Métier*" may, perhaps, be presented here, always remembering that this book was published as long ago as 1934 and so must have been written very shortly after Hitler's rise to power.

Comparing the military problems of France with those of other great Powers, General de Gaulle points out how singularly ill-adapted France is by nature to protect herself, and sums up the situation as follows:

"Gaping wide open, exposing her defenceless body to blows, de-

prived of all respite and all recourse, where then can our country find her latent protection except in arms? The Sword is not only the last argument in her quarrels, it is also the only thing that makes up for her weakness.

“Everything that is ill-adapted in her territory, absurd in her political system, infirm in her character has, in the last resort, nothing to compensate it but the warlike arts, the skill of her troops, the sufferings of her soldiers.

“And that is peculiar to our country.

“The power of the United States can grow out of all proportion to its military importance; lost wars do not compromise the future of Russia; Italy came into being in the course of numerous reverses.

“But for us, our greatness or our downfall depend directly on the fortune of battles.

“By virtue of her physical and mental make-up, France must either be well-armed or not armed at all.

“This is a harsh law which is perpetually at loggerheads with our idealism and our independent character, which gives our national existence a curiously tortured aspect, which constrained Mazarin, who disdained soldiers, to create the Royal Army, led Saint-Just into strategy, Gambetta to the Ministry for War, Rochefort into political intrigue and reserved for Clemenceau, at the end of his career, the enthusiasm of the Generals.”

That General de Gaulle was never a very firm believer in the ability of the Maginot Line or, indeed, of any system of fortresses to withstand continued attacks from modern War Machinery, is shown by the next passage quoted. It will be observed that he does not reject such fortresses completely, but he is convinced that they are not of much use by themselves and need the active support of mobile units:

“It is true that at all times France has tried to fill the breaches in her

frontiers by fortifications. She is doing so at this moment. . . . But these fortifications, quite apart from the fact that they must be given adequate garrisons, are very limited in depth. Besides, they leave the whole of the Northern region exposed.

“And how can one foresee the effects that would be produced on the defenders by modern methods of attack, aircraft, super-heavy tanks and poisonous gases? Moreover one must take into consideration the possibilities of surrender. For, of all the trials of war, the hardest, on the whole, is reserved for besieged troops. . . .

“The impression of finding oneself surrounded by assailants, the horrible feeling of isolation, the fact of having to live with one’s wounded, the continual drain on one’s strength which cannot be renewed, very soon undermine the morale of the troops. . . . Hence, of course, the supreme glory which popular instinct attributes to the valiant defenders of strongholds.”

These words recall how the daily accounts of Colonel Moscardes’ defence of the Alcazar at Toledo, in the recent Spanish Civil War, became an epic. Against overwhelming odds, against attack by shell, aeroplane, bomb, mine, uninterrupted by day or night; against famine and disease within the citadel, the gallant Spanish colonel stood fast. The stronghold did not fall, and its glorious story will thrill for all time.

“But hence also, of course,” proceeds the author, “the complete surrenders which are the constant fate of indifferent garrisons. . . . To build our defence solely on the resistance of fortifications manned by novices would be absurd.”

And he concludes his remarks concerning the means to be taken for the protection of France with these words:

“Geographically unprotected from invasion, exposed to surprise attacks, as well by the tendencies of our national character as by those

of our neighbours, we cannot confine ourselves, in order to resist the initial shock, to hasty defences and unsteady formations.

“The moment has come when, to our mass of reserves, and of recruits (the principal element of national defence, but one which is slow to assemble and clumsy to get moving and whose gigantic effort can only be used in the last degree of danger), we must add a manoeuvring instrument which is permanent in its force, coherent, broken to battle. There is no French Defence without a professional army.”

The note running through the whole book is one of insistence on the vital necessity of a permanent army of technicians, pointing out how useless a half-trained army of conscripts would be, against highly-trained mechanised troops. Nearly all his prophecies have been borne out in the intervening period. Read, for instance, this:

“If we still cling, for territorial defence, to the notion of contingents that have been discharged with the rough corners barely rounded off them, and of a host of legions dragged from the soil at the moment of need, no one any longer dares to sing the praises of such a rabble without insisting on more solid cadres at the same time. Indeed these last are increasing in numbers year by year. In twenty years their number has doubled.

“Today there are a quarter of a million professional French soldiers. The professional army has been formed in the air and on the sea. . . . On land, the elements already exist, scattered and dissolved among the crowd. And, as a re-agent precipitates matter by concentrating it, a new technical progress will bring about the formation of a privileged body among the soldiers. Armour will reappear, carried by the engine.”

## CHAPTER VI

### WAR ON WHEELS

In the same book ("Towards a Professional Army") General de Gaulle traces the evolution of armour and its gradual decline and disappearance for some ages, only to return to greater importance than ever today. Through these pages it is obvious that a keen imaginative mind is at work. One realises that de Gaulle belongs to that class of military leaders who are not afraid to break with tradition and to seize every advantage offered by science and modern invention. Such men in the Army are all too few, but among them can be counted all the most successful generals of all times.

It may be of passing interest here to recall that the Duke of Wellington was of this type of mind. The first conception of the tank may, indeed, be said to have arisen in 1826, when Mr. Samuel Gurney, one of the pioneers of the steam engine, gave a demonstration of his famous "steam-carriage" on Hounslow Heath. The Army commanders who had been invited to attend were deeply impressed and the Duke observed prophetically to Mr. Gurney: "It is scarcely possible to calculate the convenience as would be deemed from such an invention as this in war-time, and that, if fitted with sheets of armour, no enemy could withstand its charge." Exactly ninety years later, in September 1916, the first tank lurched across the barbed wire towards the panic-stricken Germans in their trenches on the Somme.

General de Gaulle's description of the arrival of the tank upon the battle-field is admirably restrained and devoid of all flamboyance.

The reader almost feels himself moving along with the mighty tanks.

“And then, suddenly, it becomes armoured. Crawling along on its caterpillars, carrying light guns and machine guns, it advances into the front line, climbs over mounds and ditches, and beats down trenches and barbed-wire entanglements. However faltering and awkward it may have appeared at first, the tank completely upset the science of tactics.

“Through the tank was reborn the art of surprise, to which it added the relentlessness of machinery.

“Through it the art of manoeuvring was restored in detail, since it could deliver either a frontal or a flank attack under fire; it could move and fire at the same time, and advance in any direction.

“Through it, above all, detachments of fighting men have recovered the mobile protection which they appeared to have lost for ever.

“And this is all the more true because the tanks which are already in service, or are shortly to be brought into service, have advanced far beyond the primitive forms in which they first appeared. Modern tanks each hold from three to fifteen men, who cannot be reached behind their armour by anything less than a direct hit by large or medium shells, and they race about the battle-field at any speed up to twenty-five miles an hour, firing in all directions.

“Their crews are protected from gas in their hermetically sealed block-house; they can conceal their movements behind smoke-screens and they are in touch by wireless with the rear, other tanks in the neighbourhood and with aircraft; they are, indeed, the aristocrats of war, freed from the fetters which shackle the infantry. Not that they avoid danger, but they do indeed avoid the weakness of soldiery in the open exposed to shells and bullets.

“For this, as much as for its power, the tank becomes the chief element of manoeuvre and, therefore, its personnel has to be very

carefully chosen. If Pyrrhus chose his elephant-keepers with such care and Darius the drivers of his scythe-wheeled chariots, if the whole social system of the Middle Ages conspired to make the horsemen the strongest and most skilful fighters, how much more important will it soon be for the land battle-ships to have crews specially recruited and trained to combined action?

“Thus evolution, in so far as one owes it to mechanisation, gives back to quality, as opposed to quantity, the importance which it had, at one time, lost.

“It is an indisputable fact that from now onward, on the sea, on land and in the air, a carefully chosen personnel, getting the most out of extremely powerful and varied material, possesses tremendous superiority over more or less confused masses. ‘We shall see,’ according to Paul Valéry, ‘the development of undertakings by a few chosen men, acting in crews and producing in a few moments or in an hour, the most shattering results in the most unexpected places.’

“No doubt this advantage will be but temporary: when once the crowd allows itself to be organised, and to be instructed with all the precision which machinery exacts; in short, when it ceases to be a crowd, specialised elements will gradually lose their relative power. But, in the delays which drag out more and more in a wider and wider field of action, and as the complication and scope of methods of warfare increase, the professionals, in their ships, their aircraft and their tanks, are certain to prevail.”

In the second half of the book, under the heading of “Composition,” there is a further prophecy about the mechanised army of the future which has particular interest today. The General must, indeed, experience a certain grim and gloomy sense of pride in the accuracy with which he foretold almost exactly what such an army might be expected to do.

*“Tomorrow the professional army will move entirely on caterpillar wheels. Every element of troops and services will make its way across mountains and valleys in the appropriate vehicles. Not a man, not a gun, not a shell, not even a piece of bread will be transported in any other way.*

“A large formation, striking camp at daybreak, will be a hundred miles away by night. It will need no more than one hour to come from a distance of 10 miles, and *across any type of country*, and take up its battle position against the enemy, or to disappear, in breaking off contact, out of range of fire and field-glasses. But this speed would be worth little if it could not be reinforced by such power of fire and assault that the rhythm of battle agreed with that of movement.

“What would be the use of moving from place to place so rapidly behind the scenes of the battle-field only to find oneself subsequently immobilised? But modern technique can solve that problem thanks to the armoured car. By advancing along this ever-widening path, the stabilisation of fronts by picked troops which warped the last war from the point of view of military art, and as a consequence, in the assessment of losses and results, will be avoided.”

Of methods of communication in war the General describes a time when all orders will be given in the field as follows:

“Thus the battle develops, a network of actions conducted with great speed, each one of which demands the participation of elements divided into many small sections. It is clear that, in spite of the qualities of the personnel, flexibility cannot be realised without a rapid and accurate system of signalling. If one had to stick to the old procedure, that is to say, to the installation of wires, the erection of telegraph posts and transmitters, agreed codes and signals, and chains of breathless orderlies, then the same difficulties, which attend in laying out the telephone, the exchange of Morse messages and the des-

patch of orderlies, would result in the same slowing-down of the tempo of battle.

“Progress, however, at the same time as it has introduced speed into the employment of engines of war, provides the means of linking them together in the necessary way. Radio-telephony has reached the point where people will be able to converse upon an unlimited number of sets without interfering with each other. The selectivity of certain sets makes them accessible only to waves of a precise length, and allows those who wish to communicate to get into touch with each other without searching and to isolate themselves from other transmissions.

“In addition, there are means of providing that there shall be no intrusion or interference on the specific wave-length of a certain set.

“Tomorrow, the majority of communications will be by the spoken word.

“At any distance, at any moment, from a tank, a car, an aeroplane, the corner of a wall, the foot of a tree, the voice of the leader will make known to his subordinates, to his equals and to his superiors, what he is ordering and what he asks, with as much ease as, in olden days, the centurion did by shouting his commands.

“It can be imagined what coherence this procedure will bestow on operations, despite the mobility of men and things.”

Commenting upon what seem to him to be the inevitable relations between the two countries of France and Germany, he says:

“Between Gauls and Teutons alternate victories have solved nothing and fulfilled nothing. At times, exhausted by war, the two nations seem to become reconciled to one another, in the way that tottering wrestlers lean against each other for support; but, as soon as they recover, each resumes his watch upon his adversary. Such instability is

in the nature of things. There is no geographic obstacle to keep the two races apart.

"The perpetual inter-mixing that has resulted from this has certainly had the effect of multiplying reciprocal influences, but it also makes any limit to the field of action purely arbitrary. Wherever it passes, the Franco-German frontier is an open wound. From whatever point it blows, the wind which sweeps it is laden with ulterior motives.

"Conflicting temperaments fan this bitterness. It is not as though each underrated the value of the other and did not dream from time to time of the great things they could do together. But their reactions are so different that they keep the two nations in a constant state of distrust of one another."

General de Gaulle entertains no illusions as to the speed with which a country like Nazi Germany, which educates its children in the belief that soldiering ranks higher than all the virtues of life, can enter fully prepared upon a war. Of the training of children and adults employed in totalitarian states he writes:

"The education of children, the training of youth in sport, the formation of adults into groups, and, above all, a deliberately induced psychology of respect and obedience, inculcate into citizens everything that may make them likely to stand up to the trial. Thus the masses, their national passions fanned to white heat, sheltered from speeches and pictures which might weaken their resolutions, permanently subjected to a hierarchy, cheering on their leaders and wearing uniforms, are ready to slip straight from peace into war, without any transition period."

De Gaulle's book urging the importance of introducing modern mechanisation into the Army, though ignored at the time by the

French authorities, inspired others of more far-seeing minds. Among them was Monsieur Paul Reynaud, who, in 1937, was one of the members of parliament for Paris and already an important figure in French politics. In that year M. Reynaud wrote a short book of about 20,000 words, entitled "The French Military Problem."

M. Reynaud's book deals almost exclusively with the question of mechanised warfare and is clearly based very largely on General de Gaulle's important work on the same subject, "Towards a Professional Army," published in 1934. In this book Reynaud pays tribute to the then Colonel de Gaulle in the following passage:

"In 1933 the French Cavalry formed the 'Light Mechanised Division,' consisting of motor machine-gun units, whippet tanks and motorised artillery.

"The same year a French officer, Colonel de Gaulle, crystallised all existing ideas on the subject by proposing the formation of a mechanised corps, consisting of several armoured divisions on the basis of tanks, of specialised infantry and artillery and one or two light divisions. Declaring that such an instrument could not possibly be manned by any but soldiers serving under special contract (as opposed to conscripts), like the Navy and the Air Force, Colonel de Gaulle called it 'A professional army,' and pointed out the advantages that France could derive from it, so far as her protection and foreign policy were concerned."

Reynaud also points out how much General de Gaulle's views on the composition of mechanised units must have influenced the Germans in the creation of their own armoured units,—drawing a comparison as follows:

"Less than a year after the idea of a specialised corps had been rejected in France as 'impossible and undesirable,' it was learnt that the Germans were creating one with all possible speed. At the beginning

of last year the 'Panzerdivisionen' made their appearance. Each of these divisions, entirely mechanised and manned by picked troops, was composed in almost exactly the way that Colonel de Gaulle had suggested in 1933 for the armoured division, and which I have used, from the technical point of view, to justify my proposals:

<i>"Armoured Division" proposed by Colonel de Gaulle in 1933</i>	<i>"Panzerdivision" 1935 model.</i>
A reconnaissance group consisting of small tanks (motor machine-guns) and of infantry detachments carried on light lorries.	A reconnaissance detachment composed of motor machine-guns and of infantry on motor-cycles and in light cars.
A brigade of tanks (500 tanks).	A brigade of tanks (540 tanks).
A brigade of infantry (6 battalions) transported by "over-land" means (motor-cycles and caterpillars), strongly provided with auxiliary artillery and anti-tank guns.	A brigade of riflemen (equivalent to 5 battalions) on motor-cycles and "over-land" vehicles, with a considerable proportion of infantry guns and anti-tank devices.
A brigade of mechanised artillery comprising one regiment of 75 mm. field guns and one of 105 mm. howitzers.	An artillery regiment of 105 mm. howitzers.
One battalion of sappers.	One detachment of pioneers.
One camouflage battalion.	Specialised units to deal with camouflage and the installation of anti-tank units.

"It must be added that this formula had already been applied, in a reduced form, in the 'Light Mechanised Division' created by Daladier in 1933. So that the original idea was a French one. This differed

essentially from the English conception of General Fuller and the Russian conception, both of which called for armoured formations operating by themselves with neither infantry nor artillery.

“The Germans paid us the compliment of adopting the French idea, which they have pushed to its logical conclusion by making their three—shortly to be six—‘Panzerdivisionen’ into the ‘Panzerkorps,’ otherwise known as the ‘Specialised Corps.’”

A sufficient number of extracts have been quoted, together with the opinion of Monsieur Reynaud, to show the importance, originality and fearlessness of General de Gaulle’s writing and to support the claim that in matters of modern warfare, his is a voice that must be heeded. He is still a young man, and it is to be hoped that still greater works from him may be forthcoming, once the task of freeing and restoring France, to which he has consecrated his whole being, is accomplished.

## CHAPTER VII

### LAON AND ABBEVILLE

It is not only in military literature that General de Gaulle has impressed his personality on the modern world that knows him, and has influenced all the military Powers of Europe with his advanced views. During the present war he had an opportunity limited by the means at his disposal, to put his theories into practice, and with striking success. It is now generally acknowledged that of all the French generals who have taken part in the present war, General de Gaulle is the one of the very few who has really distinguished himself in the battlefield itself.

General de Gaulle has traced lucidly the story of that part of the campaign in Northern France, better known in this country as the Battle of Abbeville (May 30 and 31, 1940).

The battle for Abbeville was, of course, the battle for the mouth of the Somme and the battle for the Channel ports. This had been part of an age-long programme of the German General Staff. Once the Channel ports were cut off, communications between the French and their British Allies would be seriously interrupted and the disintegration, at least of France, would in their opinion be hastened.

In this the Germans were right.

After the preliminary high-speed advance into Belgium by French and British Forces at the behest of the King of the Belgians, the French line was thinned in the region of the Ardennes, where it was believed no mechanised troops could penetrate. When, however, the historic break through on the Meuse took place, where the bridges

were not even blown up, and the Germans were forcing, and at the same time widening the breach north and south of Peronne, with Arras as the spearhead, General de Gaulle received a peremptory order from the Generalissimo, General Gamelin, to attack immediately.

General de Gaulle was at that moment in the neighbourhood of Laon, and, although unsupported by infantry and with no contact with Allied troops, he attacked at once and alone.

In a four days' bitter battle he made two specific attacks, one on the 16th and one on the 18th of May, entirely with French troops. He wrested success from the enemy, and history will recount that he was, as a result of this battle, the only French Commander who up to now had won decisively against the Germans in this war.

Despite his success, he was, on the 19th of May, withdrawn, and was ordered to form the spearhead of the attack which was to be delivered from Amiens and Peronne to Arras. The whole idea of this action, from the French and Allied point of view, was to cut into the German Armoured Corps which had filtered into a breach. This breach at the same time was lengthening and widening, and had separated the French armies of the south from the French and British armies of the north. The idea of the Staff was that the French army units in the north were to start a drive down towards Peronne, with the object of joining hands with the Southern Army, and therefore closing the gap, of which so much has been written.

Unfortunately, the supporting French troops in the South did not reach their destination in time, and the scheme had to be abandoned in face of enemy pressure.

Towards the end of this month of May, when the whole world was on tenterhooks, the fate of Abbeville became a matter of life and death to the Allies, and particularly, as has been subsequently proved,

to France. Abbeville formed a very important bridgehead, which had to be reduced whatever the cost. The French High Command looked around for a man with all the qualities essential for the task. It was patent to everyone that it was de Gaulle's job and to de Gaulle it was given.

General de Gaulle's Division was a mixed one, his heaviest tanks being about 30 tons, carrying the famous 75-mm. quick-firing guns. In contrast to the Laon battle the division was now up to full strength, which is roughly twenty thousand men. There were round about six hundred tanks, and the infantry were all motorised, that is to say they were carried in motor lorries.

So it came to pass that on this occasion General de Gaulle made history. It might be said that he was the first of all the Allied Commanders since the terrific German thrust into the Low Countries and France who fought the enemy in his own way and beat him. His tanks and mechanised troops smashed into and through the Germans. His tanks knocked out scores of German tanks, captured prisoners and material. All de Gaulle's theories had been very forcibly proved in practice.

It seemed the breaking of a new day in Allied strategy, and an Order of the Day from General Weygand, who, rushed back from Syria by air to take the place of Gamelin, the apostle of defence and defence alone, paid General de Gaulle this wonderful tribute:

“This admirable, audacious and energetic leader attacked on May 30th and 31st at the south of Abbeville towards the enemy bridgehead very strongly held, breaking through German resistance and advancing 15 kilometres (nearly 10 miles) inside the enemy lines and capturing many hundreds of prisoners and considerable material.”

In the light of what has happened since June, there is a certain grim humour in the news that this same General Weygand has, with the Pétains and Lavals, been instrumental in having sentence passed on General de Gaulle for "deserting his post."

Political disquiet was now fermenting in France, and General de Gaulle was summoned by Reynaud to Paris to take a position in the Ministry as Under-Secretary for Defence and War. Shortly afterwards, his command was relieved by General Evans of the British Armories Division and General Fortune of the 51st (Highland) Division, whose story of valour, when it is fully told, will go down for endless years in the history of our country. General de Gaulle never actually fought alongside the 51st Division, but no man is second to him in praise of their prowess.

Surveying all the happenings at Laon and in the Abbeville neighbourhood, and with intimate knowledge of the results and repercussions up to the time of France's capitulation, General de Gaulle insists, against a whole host of defeatist critics, that had his system of attacking *en masse* with tanks, *and not in driblets*, been given a fair trial it would have been proved to have stood the test.

Six months before the debacle, when Allied statesmen and politicians everywhere were telling us that "time was on our side," de Gaulle was crying to high heaven that it was nothing of the kind.

In January, during a period of most intense frost, which, in its turn, brought immobility, he was preaching to this effect:

"On no account must the French people yield to the illusion that the present military immobility fits the character of the war now in progress.

"The opposite is true. The motor gives to modern means of destruction such powers, speed, and range that the present conflict will be marked sooner or later by movements, surprises, invasions and

pursuits whose scale and rapidity will infinitely exceed those of the most shattering events of the past. Many signs already foreshadow the unleashing of new forces."

De Gaulle in his warnings refused to deviate one iota from what he had said in his books. He reiterated that the World War of 1914-1918 had proved beyond doubt the impotence of the system of massed armies, and that not only had mechanised forces assumed, but they had increased, the power that had ever been the first consideration of offensive strategy.

So convinced was he of the fundamental correctness of his reasoning, that he said and believed that the Germans themselves had not wakened up until late in the day. The reason that we did not have a *blitzkrieg* in January 1940 was simply because the Germans had not sufficient *blitzkrieg* effects.

In other words, if Germany in September 1939, when war was declared, had had twice as many planes, twice as many tanks and heavier ones, she would have walked straight into France then. What she did in Poland had convinced her, as General Guderian, the protagonist of mechanised forces in the Reich, has publicly owned, that General de Gaulle was right in all he had written about the power of mechanised forces. General Guderian, in fact, in the books which he himself wrote, borrowed or stole pages of General de Gaulle's theories, and these theories, as has already been stated, the Germans tragically enough put into practice in their onslaught on France.

In fact, it might be conceded, with little fear of military contradiction, that the French Army was beaten by theories propounded in their very midst but unfortunately disregarded.

Although it is not to be contested here that history does not modify, restrict or amplify conclusions arrived at on the battlefield, it seems meet to lay down expressly the ideas of General de Gaulle as

to what might have saved France in the days of her direst distress.

In this connection it is well to recall that General de Gaulle is one of those extraordinary soldiers who, in books and on the battlefield, has always been proved right. He attributes the terrible failure to General Weygand, the Generalissimo, and for the following reasons:

1. The French had some good mechanised troops, including 1,000 modern tanks south of the Somme. General de Gaulle implored General Weygand to keep them as one unit and not to spread them about all over the battle-field where they would be sure to be destroyed piecemeal. Weygand promised he would do this but he did not keep his promise.

2. General Weygand wanted to fight on a "front" instead of defending in depth. Consequently the whole Army was continually on the move and was exhausted and discouraged. If the men had all been put into "strong-points" behind the line and told to hold these they would have been fresh when the attack came. The Germans were just as exhausted as the French, but were elated by success, thus being able to fight on enthusiastically.

3. The best French troops, when the breakdown began, were in Lorraine and Alsace, in the Maginot Line. General de Gaulle wanted General Weygand to bring them out of this and put them on the Somme, where they might have made a stand against the enemy and held him up, thus giving the rest of the French Army time to reorganise. But General Weygand would not do this.

4. The French Government would not realise that because a battle was lost in France it was not lost in the whole world. If they had gone to North Africa they could have carried the war on from there and enormous numbers of French men would have rallied

to the flag. To say nothing of the whole fleet being kept intact. France could have held the Mediterranean.

In the avalanche of events, the world was informed, even by Paul Reynaud himself, that the failure to blow up the bridges over the Meuse, was the vital factor in the French defeat. General de Gaulle denies this.

“It is a fact that the Meuse bridges were not blown up by General Carap,” he says. But he goes on to explain that although the Marne bridges, the Oise bridges, the Seine bridges, and the Somme bridges were blown up, the Germans advanced and with the same power. It was a case, recorded General de Gaulle, of a scapegoat having to be found somewhere, and General Gamelin made one of General Carap.

## CHAPTER VIII

### BORDEAUX

On that memorable day in June when he saw his country's rulers sagging at the knees and about to bow their heads in complete submission to a foreign tyrant's will, General de Gaulle took a step which proved the greatness of his spirit and one which will also remain an inspiration to his fellow-countrymen and to all who love freedom. A tried and disciplined soldier, he doubtless found it difficult and painful to act contrary to the orders of his superiors. But for him, as a man as well as a soldier, there were greater loyalties than obedience to those in temporal authority above him. He chose loyalty to the higher virtues in him and in all Frenchmen.

In the almost inexplicable details of the military and political events leading up to the capitulation and humiliation of France, the magnificent courage and patriotism of General de Gaulle stand out like a high-powered beacon, lighting up the future.

This great decision followed closely upon the second attempt of Paul Reynaud to give effect to the theories and teachings of de Gaulle which alone, in his opinion, could bring victory to France. Five years previously M. Reynaud, inspired by de Gaulle, in whom he perceived a man possessed of great driving power and practical knowledge, as well as sound theory and abstract ideas, laid an important measure before the French Chamber. This measure, which might quite conceivably have prevented the debacle of 1940, had for its object the creation in the French Army of a corps of specialists for big and heavy

mechanised arms. But the voice of Paul Reynaud, brilliant internationalist, astute politician, patriotic Frenchman, lover of Britain, was the only one raised at that time in the wilderness of apathy and pitiable resignation. In the prevailing smugness of those days, which we in Britain also shared, to our terrible cost, the Reynaud proposal was rejected. But M. Reynaud did not forget the opinions and the greatness of this man, and when he became Premier he made another attempt to give de Gaulle an opportunity of putting his theories into practice. But it was then too late.

While General de Gaulle was engaged in stemming the advance of the Germans on the plains of Picardy and on the Somme and succeeding in driving them back, he was suddenly, and quite unexpectedly, ordered to report at once to Paul Reynaud, at the time French Premier, in Paris. He received the order late at night at his headquarters and, of course, immediately drove to Paris through the early hours of the morning. This was on the night of June 6th-7th.

It was known to all the world that things were not going too well in the French capital. At the same time, General de Gaulle was fast becoming a very popular figure in the Press and with the general public. Both were impressed, in what had become a morass of *laissez-faire*, with his brilliant individualistic and successful operations at Laon and Abbeville.

M. Reynaud believed that the inclusion of a virile, clear-thinking and strong-willed man like de Gaulle in the War Council might stiffen that body, so he had resolved to offer General de Gaulle the Under Secretaryship of State for War.

At this moment Reynaud himself was not only Prime Minister but Secretary of State for War.

Arriving in Paris, de Gaulle, fresh from the battlefield where every man had only one idea, namely, to be at the enemy and beat him

quickly, was mortified beyond measure at the agitation affecting not only the members of the War Council but Reynaud himself. They were all at sixes and sevens. He was affected all the more because he, the tall, taciturn soldier of the North, and Reynaud, the short, volatile Midi politician, had long been friends.

Paul Reynaud's desire was that this stalwart soldier, whose only motto was *Victory*, should always be at his side.

General de Gaulle's reply to the Premier's offer of the Under Secretaryship for War presents a stirring picture of the man.

"Good," he answered, "if that is your will. But on one condition and one alone—*that we wage war to the end.*"

Reynaud, clever, agile-minded, and a politician to his fingertips, resolved the question in his mind for a minute.

Then he answered:

"Go to London, now, and tell Winston Churchill the encouraging news. Say *it's war to the end.*"

That, in itself, seemed an excellent move. But General de Gaulle, among many other attributes, has a keen perception, and this led him to fear tragedy, the tragedy of which the world now knows and deplores.

It will be remembered that Reynaud, in his endeavour to strengthen the Government, had brought Weygand back from Syria and the octogenarian Pétain back from his Embassy in Madrid.

De Gaulle knew them intimately as student and soldier. He had been with Pétain as a young Lieutenant of Infantry and later at Verdun; he had fought with Weygand in the successful campaign in Poland in 1921, which freed the Poles in a few weeks from the menace of Bolshevism.

Recalling these unhappy days of the great crisis, General de Gaulle says:

"Reynaud was very much shaken and there was a most unhealthy air of conspiracy in the Pétain-Weygand entourage—a manifest defeatist desire to give up."

Before he set out to London to see the British Prime Minister, Mr. Winston Churchill, and reassure him with Reynaud's words, General de Gaulle found it necessary to discuss matters very plainly as Under Secretary of State for War with those who, not so long before, had been his respected superiors. "I fought them tooth and nail," he says.

"Let me defend the Marne," he demanded.

"No."

"Let me defend the Seine?"

"No."

"Then let me defend Paris?"

"No."

"What about the line of rivers south of Paris?"

But always the doleful "No." With other suggestions he had no more success.

On May 27th, when M. Reynaud met Mr. Winston Churchill in Paris, he had given him a very discouraging account of affairs in France, so the British Government was delighted to receive a message direct through General de Gaulle on June 8th that Reynaud, after all, had agreed to stand fast.

At this time de Gaulle was living in an upside-down world. When on the following day, June 9th, he returned to France, he "felt conspiracy" everywhere, a conspiracy to persuade Paul Reynaud to capitulate. Reynaud did not wish to do so, and General de Gaulle supported him in every way possible.

He went so far as to ask the Premier to get rid of General Weygand, who, he was convinced, was in favour of capitulation. He also made a last bid to get him to defend Paris. But it was useless.

When eventually it was decided that the Government should quit Paris, de Gaulle's quick brain thought of another strategem, for he believed then, as he firmly believes now, that France could have been saved by holding fast in any one part of her territory which, after all, is very extensive. What better than a move to Brittany, with the mighty and unscathed fleets of France and Britain riding off its coasts?

“Let us establish the Government in Brittany, then.”

This time Reynaud spoke like his true self.

“Yes,” he said, only to change his mind in the morning.

“No,” he said, “not Brittany, but Bordeaux.”

So France's road to Calvary went south through Tours and Bordeaux.

When Mr. Churchill flew to Tours in his magnificent effort to evade disaster in the last hour, Reynaud, tired nigh to death by the continual droning of the defeatists surrounding him, insisted that the Treaty of Alliance with Great Britain should be cancelled.

De Gaulle, who was present at the conference, fought with every ounce of patriotic spirit to get Reynaud to visualise the terrible consequences of such a step.

Later in Bordeaux, de Gaulle tried once more to get the French Government to cross to Africa. He pointed out that it was hopeless to carry on at Bordeaux in the midst of hundreds of thousands of panicky refugees.

“Why Africa?” whined the men who had long since made up their minds, and have now taken their miserable place in history as the Vichy men.

“Because to Africa we can yet move hundreds of thousands of troops and vast stores of material,” countered de Gaulle.

Disillusioned about the rulers of his beloved land, but yet undismayed, de Gaulle dashed by air to London, again to contact Mr.

Churchill, ask for half a million tons of shipping and lay the facts before his English Allies.

Too late!

Even in the midst of war with all its tragedy, nothing could be more tragic than the picture of the buoyant, restless de Gaulle's second visit to London.Flushed with patriotic fervour, in the evening he discussed with Mr. Churchill the proposal from one of his own closest friends (M. Corbin the well-beloved French Ambassador in London) that France and Great Britain should unite in the bonds of Dominion. In the late hours he pleaded with Reynaud over the telephone; but Reynaud would not, or rather was not permitted to agree. Even Mr. Churchill's most powerful pleading failed.

The Baudouins and the Lavals were closing in. When de Gaulle awakened after a troubled night, he was handed the dreaded news that his old friend Reynaud had fallen from power. With Paul Reynaud's fall, darkness and untold suffering descended upon France.

As in a vision, de Gaulle saw clearly the only way to the salvation of his country: "Go to England and co-operate with his Allies."

But with grim determination, he first returned to Bordeaux to have it out with Pétain and Weygand. He made nothing of it. It became crystal clear that Pétain and Weygand had agreed to capitulate in spite of everything, so de Gaulle lost no time. He made haste for England, where, in consultation with the British Government, he set to the task of raising his army of liberation.

## CHAPTER IX

### LONDON

There is another side of General de Gaulle's personality that singles him out for a place in history and which will ensure for him the honour and affection of his compatriots throughout the ages. He is more than a great soldier and military thinker; more than a far-seeing planner of victory; more even than a great man who dares to be true to his country and to the noble cause of freedom to which she was pledged, in defiance of the dictates of men who handed over his country to the enemy. There is in de Gaulle a spiritual quality which influences other men to think and act as nobly as himself. He is destined to be a leader of armies and a leader of men.

Calm and sure, his speech is always to the point, his diction clear; no man in any language could be more explicit. Everything he writes or says goes straight to the understanding of every class. If it is for the cause which he has at heart, his written or spoken word carries his zeal embodied in it and inspires all with his own enthusiasm.

This inspiring influence is particularly noticeable among his staff and immediate entourage. Many examples might be quoted, but one will suffice to show what great spiritual forces are at work in the hearts of his men.

A 28-year old commander in the Free French Fleet was twice torpedoed in three weeks—first off Norway and then at Dunkirk. This staunch son of an old Breton family, to whom the sea is the breath of life, suffered through the fortunes of war two broken legs, a shattered

foot and a fracture of the collarbone. The more serious of his injuries were sustained not in his ships, but on land in Belgium, where, after his second torpedoing, he landed with his surviving crew and tackled the Nazis with cutlass, rifle and bomb. In the pride of getting a new ship of the Free French Navy, and deeply moved by messages from General de Gaulle, this valiant young man read to his crew the Order of the Day which he himself had penned—prose, surely, that thrills the blood:

“Tomorrow I will lead you into battle.

“The aim of our fight is to show the world that France, in standing by her promise to continue the struggle, retains her honour and her flag.

“We shall be nameless and free from party politics. We are simply acquitting a debt to our country by sacrificing everything to her—even our families—in return for the thousand years of happiness and security she has given to our forefathers.

“The debt of honour to France—this debt of honour to the world—is dictated to us by our hearts.

“I want you, my children, always to have the same honour and pride in fighting under the French flag in French uniform as I have in commanding you.”

His crew were spellbound with emotion, and to hide his own the Commander hurried from his ship. Later in the evening he received a note from his crew, as moving as the Order itself:

“Commander,” wrote these brave, Free Frenchmen—all with families under the abhorrent German yoke, “the emotion which seized us when you took command of this ship kept us from answering you with cheers.

“We know that you interpreted that silence as an admission that we are with you body and soul.

“Henceforth the crew of this ship is but one man. *And that man is you.*

“Yes, Commander, we make a gift to our beloved France and to our flag of our families and our names. You know how precious these are to us.

“But today honour remains.

“Tomorrow we shall add glory to honour for France and for our flag.

“And now, Commander, we await your orders!”

This influence of the great Frenchman who is now the leader of all Free French People will extend wider and wider in France itself as the weeks go by, despite the presence of the Nazis in the occupied territory and the fear of them in the unoccupied part of the country.

The people in France have heard much of de Gaulle during the past few months. They want to hear more of him. They are coming to look upon him as the saviour of their country. Many of the French folk already regard him as destined to repeat the role of Joan of Arc and believe that he will come to France to lead them in chasing the hated Germans out of their beloved country. Others are drawing parallels between the exile of General de Gaulle and the vicissitudes of Henry of Navarre, who eventually triumphed over all his foreign and internal enemies and restored the greatness of France. This manner of thinking on the part of the French people, at present in subjection to the Nazis, will steadily grow into an irresistible force, and the day that de Gaulle returns to lead them to their freedom again will indeed be an evil one for the Germans.

Following those seemingly interminable hours about the time of the Armistice, when French people of all classes lived in such distressing anxiety and shame, in such dark confusion of thought, a shout of joy went up to Heaven when, penetrating through all the

bewildering news they were receiving, a French Voice was heard in the night. For the moment it was but a Voice speaking to them from afar. But it carried hope to their wounded souls.

Smarting and dumb from the defeat of their country which their Government had all too readily accepted, the people caught the voice of General de Gaulle in his first broadcast message. He said:

June 18th

*NO!*

*Defeat is not certain.*

The commanders, who have been at the head of the French armies for many years, have formed a government.

This government, alleging the defeat of our armies, has negotiated with the enemy in order to cease fighting.

Certainly we have been, and we are, submerged by the mechanical, ground and air forces of the enemy. . . .

But has the last word been said? Must hope disappear? *Is defeat definite? NO!*

Believe me, who know of what I speak, when I say that nothing is lost for France. The same means that have defeated us can one day make victory possible.

Since France is not alone. *She is not alone.* She has a vast Empire behind her. She can join with the British Empire, which rules the seas and continues the struggle. She can, as does England, use the immense industries of the United States without limit.

This war is not limited to the unfortunate territory of our country. This war is not decided by the battle of France. This is a world war. In spite of all the mistakes, the delays, and the sufferings there is still, in the universe, everything necessary to crush our enemies.

Destroyed today by mechanical force, we shall be able to con-

quer, in the future, with superior mechanical force. The destiny of the world lies there.

I, General de Gaulle, now in London, invite the French officers and men who are or who will be in British territory, with or without arms; I invite the engineers and the specialised workmen in armament industries, who are or who will be on British territory, to get into touch with me.

Whatever may happen, *the flame of French resistance must not and will not go out.*

I am aware that I speak in the name of France.

In the name of France I formally declare the following:

*Every Frenchman who still bears arms has the absolute duty to continue resistance.*

To lay down arms, to evacuate a military position, to agree to place any piece of French territory under the control of the enemy would be a crime against the country.

*Soldiers of France, wherever you may be, rise up!*

An appeal to resist and to continue the fight against the German invaders in whatever way the French people might find possible was made four days later on the air:

June 22, 1940

*Honour,  
Common-sense,  
Interests of the country.*

The French Government, having asked for an Armistice, now knows the conditions dictated by the enemy.

It might be said that this Armistice would not only be a capitulation but also an enslavement. . . .

Honour, common-sense, and the interests of the country com-

mand every free Frenchman to continue the fight, where and how he can.

It is, therefore, necessary to gather together wherever it can be done as large a French force as possible. All those who can be re-united, as French military elements or for French armaments production, should be organised wherever they are.

The following day (June 23rd) people in all parts of France picked up a further message, stressing the fact that the Armistice which the Bordeaux Government had accepted was a sheer capitulation. On June 28th they were informed that the British Government had recognised General de Gaulle as Leader of Free Frenchmen.

Following this recognition by the British Government, the status of General de Gaulle in this country was soon to be confirmed. On August 24th, His Majesty King George VI inspected units of the Free French Army at a military encampment somewhere in Britain. With the Union Jack and the Tricolor flying side by side above them, the Head of the British Empire and the leader of Free France moved together down the ranks of detachments from several of the most famous regiments of France, symbolic of the closer union that is being forged between the people of Britain and the people of the New France that is now forming out of the ruins of the old.

General de Gaulle has reason to know something of the nature of the spiritual struggle which French people had to go through when their country was handed over to the German conqueror. Whilst fully appreciating the attitude of those who felt they could not follow his example, he spoke some straight words to them on this matter in his next broadcast, which cannot have failed to have made a lasting impression on many in France who now patiently wait for the hour of deliverance:

*The heart of France  
Is with those  
Who continue the struggle.*

July 2, 1940

After the moral break-down of the Army High Command and the Government caused by the lightning action of the German mechanical force, two ways were open.

One was the way of surrender and despair. This is the one which the Bordeaux Government has chosen. Breaking off the engagement which bound France to her Allies, this Government has, as Tacitus would say, "Rushed into servitude."

The other way is that of honour and hope. This is the road which I and my companions have chosen to tread.

But many Frenchmen find themselves torn between the two ways. On one side the call of the Governors who have fallen to the power of the enemy; on the other the call of France crying for deliverance.

Those good Frenchmen, those simple Frenchmen, those Frenchmen who put France before vanity, terror or self-interest, I beg them to ask themselves this:

Would Joan of Arc, Richelieu, Louis XIV, Carnot, Napoleon, Gambetta, Poincaré, Clemenceau, Foch, ever have agreed to give up all the arms of France to the enemy so that he could use them against their Allies? Would Duquesne, Tourville, Suffren, Courbet, Guepratte, ever have agreed to put the French fleet intact into the hands of the enemy?

All true Frenchmen should ask themselves these questions. They would then understand where honour, interest and commonsense lie. They would also understand where the heart of France is.

*The soul of France! It is with those who continue the struggle in all possible ways, active or passive, with those who do not give up, and with those who will, one day, be present at the victory.*

The simplicity and strength of de Gaulle's broadcast message to the French on the eve of the National Celebration of the Fall of the Bastille must have caused the Nazi usurpers some uneasiness, for a talk of this kind and on such an occasion would, above all else, inspire the secret hope which all French folk cherish and fortify them in their resolution to rid themselves of their hated masters.

July 14, 1940

*Day of mourning  
But of secret hope.*

This evening, eve of the quatorze juillet (France's historic day of rejoicing for the fall of the Bastille), there is not one French thought which is not for France alone.

Not, certainly, that we need think of ourselves as plunged in affliction or shrouded in resignation. Such an excess of sadness and abandon would be playing into the hands of the enemy.

For the moment as much as possible must be done, actively or passively, to lead to the defeat of the enemy. If this is done we shall be re-born; if this is not done each day the enemy will break us, rob us and strangle us still further. To pretend that France can be, and can continue to be, France, under Hitler's boot and Mussolini's shoe, must be either senility or treason.

*If then the 14th July, 1940, is a day of mourning for the country it must be, at the same time, a day of secret hope. Yes, the victory will be won, and it will be won, I am certain, with the help of French arms.*

## CHAPTER X

### VICHY

Among other qualities necessary in a leader of men General de Gaulle possesses that of being forthright in all he says or does. He never speaks unless he is sure of what he has to say, and this has gained for him an undeserved reputation for taciturnity. He never acts until he is sure that the action is right. This quality of fearless straightforwardness must have been noted by British listeners in the General's straight talk to Marshal Pétain on the wireless and in his blunt opinion on the necessary yet unfortunate sinking of the French ships at Oran by the British Fleet. It was also evinced in his broadcasts on the subject of the Riom trials ordered by the men of Vichy, but instigated by the Nazis themselves.

To Pétain he said on June 26:

Monsieur le Maréchal!

Someone must reply to you. . . .

Monsieur le Maréchal! It is a French soldier who is speaking to you, by radio, over the sea.

Yesterday, I listened to your voice, which is well known to me, and, not without emotion, I heard what you said to the French people to justify what you have done.

Monsieur le Maréchal! In these hours of shame and anger for our country, a voice must reply to you. This evening that voice will be mine.

Monsieur le Maréchal! You have been made to believe that the

Armistice, asked of the soldiers by the great soldier that you are, would be an honourable one for France. I think that now you realise that *armistice is dishonourable*.

But you have judged, you say, that you must and that you can subscribe to it. You have held as absurd all prolongation of resistance in the French Empire. You have considered as derisory the effort which our Ally, the British Empire, has made and will make. You refused in advance the resources offered by immense America. You have played, lost, thrown in your cards and emptied our pockets as if we had no trump left.

That is the effect of a sort of profound discouragement and gloomy scepticism, which has been a great factor in the breakdown of the supreme resistance of our forces in the Mother Country.

Monsieur le Maréchal! It is in the same tone that you call the free France, the pillaged France and the enslaved France to take up work again, to remake herself and to rise again. But in what atmosphere, by what means, in the name of what, do you think that she can rise again under the German boot and the Italian shoe?

*Yes, France will rise again. She will rise in liberty. She will rise in victory.* Throughout the Empire, throughout the world, even here in England French forces are being formed and organised. The day will come when our arms, reforged far away, but well sharpened will join with those of our Allies, and perhaps, with others, and will return triumphant on the national ground. *Then, indeed, we will remake France!*

English people will readily admit the fairness of General de Gaulle's observations on the Oran episode, which will never be inscribed as a victory in the annals of our Navy.

July 8, 1940

*I say to the English:**—It is not glorious.**I say to the French:**—I would have preferred . . .*

In a drama where each nation plays for its life, men of resolution must have the courage to look things in the face and to speak frankly of them. Firstly I would say: there is not one Frenchman who will not have learnt with sadness and anger that the ships of the French Fleet have been sunk by our Allies. This sadness and this anger come from the depth of our hearts. There is no reason to hide them and, for myself, I express them openly.

Speaking to the English, I ask them to spare us and themselves from any representation of this hateful tragedy as a direct naval success. That would be unjust and misplaced. The French ships were, actually, not in a condition for fighting. They were at anchor, with no possibility of either dispersing or manoeuvring, and both the officers and the crews had been racked for fifteen days by frightful mental agony. They left the first salvos, which it is well known are decisive at such a distance on the sea, to the English ships. Their destruction is not the result of a glorious battle.

This is what a French soldier would say to his English Allies, with even more truthfulness since he has a great esteem for them in naval matters.

Speaking to the French, I ask them to consider the basis of things from the only point of view which will count in the end, that is to say from the point of view of victory and delivery. The Government, which was at Bordeaux, agreed, because of a dishonourable promise, to give up our ships to the enemy. There is not the

least doubt that, from principle and necessity, the enemy would have used them either against England or against our own Empire.

Therefore, I say without circumlocution that it would have been better had they been destroyed, I would rather have seen even the *Dunkerque*, our beautiful, beloved and powerful *Dunkerque*, beached before Mera-el-Kebir, than to have seen it, manned by Germans, bombarding English ports, or Algiers, Casablanca, or Dakar....

No Frenchman worthy of the name could fail to realise that an English defeat would seal the French enslavement for ever.

The act of the present nominal rulers of France in arraigning those Frenchmen who have had the courage to continue the struggle against the usurpers in their country, and the morality to try to keep the solemn pledges entered into by their Government is one of the most tragic aspects of the war. The world may call the proceedings at Riom farcical, but the inherent sadness of them can never be removed.

General de Gaulle, to whom France owes so much and who has proved himself to be one of the noblest Frenchmen of the age, is, as leader of the Free Frenchmen, one of the chief of the accused and the condemned. He has given his view upon this in three recent broadcasts:

August 3, 1940

*Hitler roars*

*Mussolini howls*

The enemy is beginning to dismember and has succeeded in sacking that part of French territory which he occupies. The old men who are looking after themselves at Vichy employ their time

and vent their spleen in having those condemned who are guilty of continuing to fight for France, when at this very moment the German and Italian Armistice commissions are working their way through our Empire.

To accept such a state of affairs, to allow that to happen, means the loss of our Colonies. For each one of them this means the surrender of all arms, the demobilisation of the troops which guard her, the renunciation of all economic life and, as a result, to condemn themselves to ruin and revolt.

On this question I cannot allow myself to mince words.

And in the name of what are ordained these revolts, this ruin? In the name of the self-styled Government formed in the great Bordeaux panic. I can say this, because I myself have seen how this horror took place. It is a Government which has been constantly dissolved and reformed and one which is not and cannot be anything but the instrument of the enemy's will.

It is now a question of whether the French Colonies will consent to be surrendered, starved, put to fire and sword, to pander to the terrors which the roaring of Hitler and the barking of Mussolini strike into the hearts of the old men of Vichy.

Well! This evening I can tell the French that this will not happen everywhere. I can tell the French people, this evening, that in many parts of the Empire brave men have come forward, resolute in their determination to preserve the French Colonies.

It is only necessary for those men to impose their will, for the safety and the economic life of the country in which they live to be assured both now and in the future!

But time presses! Things happen swiftly in this Great War, which is also a great revolution. Duty towards France and duty towards the Empire forbid hesitation, over-caution and cowardly

considerations. In this immense upheaval the only men who count and who are of any value are those who are able to think, will and act according to the terrible rhythm of events.

The others will be swept aside.

That is why those who today are in authority in our Colonies will follow the path of duty and do their best for their country if they refuse to apply the dishonourable Armistice conditions. If, unfortunately for France and themselves, any of the present leaders surrender, those who are in a position to do so will follow the path of duty and will do their best for their country by taking the place of those leaders who are indeed unworthy.

*The French Army is rising again. The French Air Force is rising again. The French Fleet is rising again.*

*The French Empire will be able to live—but only by fighting for liberty.*

August 8, 1940

*Our blasted armies  
And those responsible*

The so-called Court of Law which assembled at Riom did not naturally have as its aim that of punishing the persons really responsible for the momentary defeat of France. No seriously minded man can possibly see anything in it but a piece of stage management.

The wretched people who have betrayed France by capitulating are trying to divert attention from their own crimes.

So they are doing their utmost to throw the blame on other people.

They accuse some of them of having agreed to declare war and others of not being prepared for it. They pretend to believe that

Hitler and Mussolini are not what they really are, that is to say, ruthless conquerors. . . .

By going down on their knees without fighting, by kindly allowing their territory to be occupied, by freely surrendering their Empire, by delivering up their sword even before it was drawn, by cheerfully accepting on all points the law dictated by the enemy; in short, by capitulating in advance, our country would not have gone to war.

Clearly, France, thus dishonoured, would no longer have been France, but this consideration has no doubt escaped the Vichy prosecutors.

The names of those who are guilty before God and before man of having desired war and who, besides, loudly proclaimed it, are well enough known in all conscience: they are Hitler and Mussolini.

Those in our own country who are guilty of having been unprepared for war are, frankly, the very people to whom was given the duty of preparing it. This war was a mechanised war and our armies were blasted by the German mechanised forces. The people who are entirely responsible for our disasters on the battlefield are those who, whether War Ministers or High Military Commanders, neglected to remodel the French Army, and I am convinced that at least two of these are at the present moment at the head of the self-styled Vichy Government.

August 12, 1940

*An anaesthetised France*

*But mighty Britain*

The enemy's trickery and the lies of his accomplices led our country into signing detestable armistices. The enemy and his ac-

complices were able to create such a pernicious atmosphere that they anaesthetised France.

They had been enabled to make many people think that capitulation was necessary because all was lost. . . .

But events happen swiftly in this war of speed. The few weeks that have elapsed since these detestable armistices have sufficed to show up the whole extent of the crime that has been committed. Now one can see the matter very clearly.

We see, first of all, that, contrary to the statements of the old men of Vichy, France still possessed powerful means of fighting at the time our arms were given up. We see that we still had an intact fleet, the second in Europe, a large Air Force and a vast Empire.

We see that the British Empire is at the height of its naval, aerial and military efforts. We see that America has undertaken to help the Allies with vast armament manufacture. . . .

How can we think without anger of that reconstruction of France promised by the old men of Vichy? How can they reconstruct anything in the abyss into which they have plunged us? Having chained themselves to the conquerors' saddle-tree, they have no further earthly use than to receive humbly the kicks of Hitler's horse and Mussolini's ass. . . .

My aim, my sole aim, is to act so that, in spite of momentary desertion, France does not stop fighting, and that France shall be present at the Victory.

That is why I have recently signed a very important agreement with the British Government. By virtue of this agreement, I, who am at present leader of Free Frenchmen, undertake to organise a French force to fight side by side with our Allies. On its side the British Government undertakes completely to restore the independence and greatness of France after victory has been achieved.

Abundant evidence is forthcoming every day that the personality of General de Gaulle, particularly as it reveals itself in his leadership of the Free Men of France, is causing growing uneasiness among the tyrants of Berlin. For all their cheap gibes the Nazi rulers know in their hearts that General de Gaulle is the greatest Frenchman that has arisen out of the confusion of war and they fear that the strength of New France that is gathering to him will become a moral and material force which is bound to triumph. The fury with which Berlin reacted to his broadcast on August 22nd betrayed the fears the Nazis cannot suppress.

In that broadcast General de Gaulle gave to the world the astonishing information that even at that moment the Vichy Government of Marshal Pétain was bringing back no fewer than 800 aeroplanes from the French African Empire to be handed over to the enemy. He said:

Two months have elapsed since the signature of the detestable Armistice. France, at the orders of a senile Marshal, laid down her arms two months ago.

By means of this surrender, the enemy and the men of Vichy undertook to make the French people believe that all was lost. The enemy and the men of Vichy undertook to make us believe that we had to be resigned and to submit to punishment with humility or, as they say at Vichy, with discipline.

For the enemy, the so-called Vichy Government had, moreover, another part to play. This part consisted of forcing the capitulation of those people in the French Empire who wished to go on fighting. In this way, Hitler's eagle and Mussolini's vulture could easily settle on Casablanca, Tunis, Chad, Dakar, Jibuti and Beirut. Naturally, the Vichy men made every effort to satisfy their masters. At this very moment, 800 aeroplanes, the mainstay of

African defence, are leaving Morocco, Algiers and Tunis to be taken to Istres and put at the disposal of the enemy.

In order that this appalling task should be accomplished and that the keys of our Empire should be handed over, the enemy and his accomplices had a stroke of genius. This stroke of genius consisted of putting the great military leaders who had been beaten in command. Thus, these great military leaders, demoralised by their own defeat and anxious that everyone should fall since they themselves had fallen, became the best means of the Armistice terms being carried out. They still possessed enough remnants of prestige and vestige of authority to impose this ignominy upon other people.

Sheltering behind the senile Marshal, one of these called himself Minister for Air. But what has he done to our aviation? Another calls himself Minister for the Navy. But where is our Navy? And yet another declares himself to be Minister for War. But of what war? And, lastly, another, and I think that he is the worst—the very man who receives the orders of enemy Commissions—poses as Minister for National Defence.

Well! I say that these men, if they formerly served France, are betraying her today. I say that these soldiers are no longer soldiers, that these Frenchmen are no longer Frenchmen, and that these men are no longer men.

But I say also that their behaviour is as absurd as it is dishonourable. I say that what today they call their politics are just as ill-calculated as what yesterday they called their strategy.

I say, because I see it, that our ally, Britain, becomes daily stronger and richer than she was the day before. I say, because I know it, that an irresistible current is bearing the New World towards the rescuing arms of Liberty. I say, because that is what I am

now endeavouring to foster, that the strength of France is beginning to revive. Among all the enemy aeroplanes which have crashed during these past days, those which we ourselves have brought down are witnesses to this.<sup>1</sup>

Good sense, wisdom and even skill are on the side of honour. We shall soon see, as we have always seen, that for France nothing is more sensible than to fight.

Among the universal commentary which this broadcast evoked, one epitomises the general opinion. The well-known commentator, "Peterborough," wrote in the London *Daily Telegraph* (under "London Day by Day"):

"A few more talks of this calibre will spread dismay in the Axis Powers. The growing attacks the German and Italian press and radio are now making on General de Gaulle and his Army of All Free Frenchmen proves the growing concern in Berlin and Rome at the wave of support for the *Connétable* that is sweeping through France and the French Colonial Empire."

Berlin and Rome will soon have cause for still greater concern at the growing strength and deeds of the "High Constable" of France and his valiant Free Frenchmen.

<sup>1</sup> This is an allusion to the German bombers shot down by the Free French Fleet at a Southern Port on August 12th, 1940.

## CHAPTER XI

### MANIFESTO

The capitulation of the French Government was not the capitulation of the French people. Powerless for the moment to express their will, they bear their humiliation with patience and fortitude. Their patriotism is not quenched nor is their courageous spirit crushed to death. They await the day when France will arise again and when they themselves will again be a free people.

Meanwhile, two bodies claim to speak for them, and one of these is styled their Government. To that strange Government they must submit awhile, cherishing ever the secret hope of a great liberation. They know that the heart that throbs with theirs is in London; that the voice which speaks their true desires and thoughts is the voice of General de Gaulle, to whom all French people, save those who have miserably abandoned themselves to the Nazi conqueror, now chiefly look for their deliverance.

Whilst General de Gaulle grows in stature in the eyes of all true French citizens, the members of the puppet Government at Vichy wither and shrivel more and more towards complete decrepitude. The new France can be born only of the virile body of the armies of All Free Frenchmen, now so progressively active at its London headquarters and hourly and daily increasing in numbers coming from all the corners of the world.

Soon after his arrival in London General de Gaulle issued, in French, the following manifesto and solemn declaration of faith:

*To All Frenchmen*

France has lost a battle!  
But France has not lost the war!

A makeshift Government may have capitulated, giving way to panic, forgetting honour, delivering their country into slavery. Yet nothing is lost!

Nothing is lost, because the war is a world war. In the free universe immense forces have not yet been brought into play. Some day these forces will crush the enemy. On that day France must be present at the Victory. She will then regain her liberty and her greatness.

That is my goal, my only goal!  
That is why I ask all Frenchmen, wherever they may be, to unite with me in action, in sacrifice and in hope.

Our country is in danger of death. Let us fight to save it.

*Long Live France!*

GENERAL DE GAULLE.

Even before the new organisation of Free Frenchmen was approaching completion a number of active units had been brought together and had engaged the enemy in battle. And General de Gaulle gave the following short broadcast, which informed the world that there were Frenchmen still risking their lives for the salvation of their country and the cause of freedom:

July 23, 1940

*French Forces have resumed  
The way of honour,  
The way of battle.*

On 21st July the battle was resumed between the French Forces and the enemy. It was resumed in the air, over German territory. Soon it will be resumed on sea and on land.

Every Frenchman, wherever he is, must now lift up his head.

If the mistakes of certain political and military leaders have caused our country to be badly prepared for war and badly led in battle, if the mistakes of the same military and political leaders have thrown it momentarily into servitude, French forces are rising up again.

*French Forces are retaking the way of honour, which is that of battle.*

I am certain that every Frenchman, every Frenchman worthy of that name, will learn of this event with pride and hope.

Five days later General de Gaulle was able to announce on the wireless the British Government's recognition of himself and his armies of all Free Frenchmen. Virtually, this means the disavowal of the defeatist clique at Vichy obviously rendered impotent before the Nazi will and power. The General's announcement was as follows:

July 28, 1940

*Free France has not  
Ceased to live.  
We will prove it by arms.*

The engagement which the British Government has just taken, in recognising me as Leader of Free Frenchmen, has great importance and profound significance.

This engagement allows all Free Frenchmen to organise themselves and to continue the war at the side of our Allies.

This engagement signifies that the effort of All Free Frenchmen and that of our Allies shall be as one until Victory.

I have decided this:

1. I take under my authority all Frenchmen who live in British territory, or who will come there.

2. Ground, air and naval French forces will be formed immediately.

Generals, Commanders, Superiors and Governors throughout the Empire, get into touch with me so that we may unite our efforts and save French territories.

In spite of the capitulations, which have already been made by so many of those who are responsible for the honour of the Flag and the greatness of the Country, the free *France* is not dead.

*We will prove it with arms!*

The Nazis have naturally tried to belittle this new leadership and the armies of all Free Frenchmen, but their efforts to dwarf its importance have had no effect upon the outside enlightened world. The Voice that thrilled the peasants in their homesteads, the workers in the factories and, indeed, the whole population in France and French people in all parts of the world, inspiring them with the grand hope of the resurrection of their beloved country, has also penetrated the dull drums of the Nazis' ears and has caused an unpleasant and ominous tingling under their thick hides. For the Germans who have any access at all to news of world happenings this Voice is a portent; they must know that it is not the Voice of one merely crying in the wilderness, but of a magnetic power that is drawing to it forces capable of destroying tyranny.

The sneer of German propaganda that General de Gaulle's organisation is merely a body of "generals without armies" is belied by the known facts. Within a few days of landing in this country pilots of General de Gaulle's Free French Air Force were bombing military targets in Germany, and the Nazi war machine was once more feeling the effective force of French arms. Every day warships and submarines of the Free French Navy were being re-equipped and manned by French sailors, and were sailing out to seek and fight the foe in many waters.

The Armies of de Gaulle, which includes an important group of the Foreign Legion, now numbers many thousands. It grows daily, being reinforced by soldiers escaping from France, by men arriving from overseas, and by continual formation of Naval, Air Force and Army units in all parts of the great French Colonial Empire. One of the encouraging features is the large number of youngsters, most of whom were destined for military colleges in France. These and other signs go to show that the youth of France is rallying to the true cause of their country, wherever that is possible, and that where escape to these shores is impossible the young people in France are straining at the leash in their impatience for the day when they will be able to join the forces of freedom. Those who have reached these shores have one and all begged to enrol under General de Gaulle, and they have declared their determination to risk death rather than submit to a life under the domination of their country's enemy. It is not too much to hope that among these courageous youngsters will be many who may yet play important parts in the struggle towards the deliverance of their country.

It is not only the rank and file who are flocking in ever-increasing numbers to the standard raised by General de Gaulle. Among the officers of the French navy, army and air force dismay at the fate of

their country under the puppet rule of the Men of Vichy is urging resolution to make a stand for the re-establishment of the independence of France. One of the latest to join General de Gaulle is Colonel de Larminat, Chief of the French General Staff in the Near East at the time of the French surrender, who arrived in London on August 24th, after an adventurous and perilous escape from arrest in Syria. Colonel de Larminat has gained the reputation of being one of the most brilliant officers in the French Army. On his arrival in this country he reported to General de Gaulle on the situation in Syria and on the requirements and fine spirit of the French troops who have left Syria for Egypt, where they form a combatant unit to continue the fight against the enemy.

At the moment, the largest force of de Gaulle's Army of All Free Frenchmen is stationed at camps in Great Britain. Among them are Legionaries who fought in Norway and France, men of the French Northern Army who escaped from the hell of Dunkirk, volunteers from among Frenchmen resident in Britain and in North and South America, airmen who made daring flights from France in order to fight on against the enemy, naval officers and men who chose to defend their freedom rather than hoist the Swastika. The call to freedom has been heard in the French Colonies, and the response is most heartening—from Algeria, Morocco, the lands of French West Africa, Chad, even from Cochin-China and the remote New Hebrides and New Caledonia, which, in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, were first in the French Empire to raise de Gaulle's standard.

In the Americas, from the Arctic to the Antarctic, there comes ever-growing support. Three French centres have been set up in the Argentine, and further centres have been established in Brazil, Uruguay, Chile, Peru and Venezuela. Before this book appears in print

there will be still more of these active centres for aiding the cause of the Free French.

Powerful and widespread support is being received in the United States. A large number of committees in many States have been set up to organise and direct help for the leader of the Army of all Free Frenchmen and to contribute to this cause in money and various other forms of assistance. One of the chief tasks which these American committees have taken upon themselves is to facilitate the passage of Frenchmen who wish to join de Gaulle's rapidly growing forces temporarily located in Britain.

These men of the Free French Army have never known their country to be anything but free. The thought of their homes and families under the iron heel of Germany, of their beloved France writhing beneath the whip of the Gestapo, has instilled in them a resolve and purpose seldom known before.

If France hated Germany before the capitulation, Free France hates Nazi Germany now a thousandfold more. These men know that they are not deserters; they know they are not traitors, as Goebbels clumsily attempts to brand them. They have a high and sacred cause. They are fighting for their homes and families and for their country, the future of themselves, their children and of generations to come. Above all, they are fighting; France is fighting on. They are ready. Alongside its British Allies the Free French Army also waits for the great day when General de Gaulle says: *En Avant!*

## CHAPTER XII

### PLAN FOR VICTORY

The story of General de Gaulle has been told because this man and his work are inevitably linked with the coming invasion of Germany to a degree of importance that can scarcely be overrated.

It has been made clear that the British Government, as certain Ministers have shown in their speeches, are deliberately planning for this greatest of all the phases of the war. The British fighting forces and, in truth, all British citizens also look forward to the great day when the fight for victory will be carried across the German frontier or shores and the Germans given a salutary sample of the injuries which they readily and joyfully inflict upon other races. There can be no opposition to the view that the fighting of the war in Germany itself is the surest means of winning the final victory.

On the other hand, some thinking people, today, may be justified in pointing to the colossal difficulties of even attempting an invasion of Nazi Germany, let alone achieving a definitive success there. By sea, Germany is not easily accessible to an invading force and the defences of her coasts, no matter what section may be selected, are certainly formidable. Behind her frontiers she has millions of efficiently trained armed forces of such rapid mobility that within a very short time a huge mechanised army could be brought together from any quarter to resist any invasion. Further, by whatever means a large invading army might be able to cross into Germany there would remain the formidable difficulties of maintaining communications with the bases and insuring a continuous flow of supplies.

These are very real and very great difficulties, but they must not be regarded as insurmountable, for if there is one aspect of the present war which will for ever impress the world as truly wonderful it is the way in which the "impossible" has repeatedly been accomplished. Not once, but several times, difficulties which seemed beyond all human thought and power to overcome have been surmounted, and the world left gasping at the audacity, the unbelievable imagination, the sheer force and marvellous spirit of the enterprise.

The Germans have again and again proved themselves to be outstanding in this respect. Indeed, the discomfiture of the Allies must be largely attributed to their inability to believe that every difficulty can be overcome. All too often, with tragic results, they have placed their reliance in certain obstacles being so formidable that no cunning could conceive of the successful employment of any force against them, only to awaken to see the Germans right upon them. The Germans apparently make a study of every particular obstacle to their progress and then create the specific machinery for overcoming it.

The British, too, can point to recent achievements which only the boldest of thinkers would previously have conceived to be possible. Dunkirk, for example, will for ever stand out in the world's history as one of the very greatest tributes to the ingenuity, the intrepidity, the physical endurance and the supreme idealism of man, working against the most formidable and desperately overwhelming odds.

Experience in this war teaches us that no difficulty is too great for great minds and great men of action to overcome. It tells us to tackle any and every obstacle in our path with reason and imagination. It urges us, by inference, to attempt the greatest task of all: the eventual invasion of Germany.

Reason, too, leads in the same direction. The British Navy commands the seas and is today far bigger and stronger than it was at the

outbreak of the war. Although the details of the building programme cannot be divulged, the nation has the full assurance that the Navy will continue to grow in strength and that its supremacy will never be wrested from it. Hitherto, Britain has been at some disadvantage in the air, where, both in absolute numbers and in the rate of production, the Germans have been ahead of this country. That disadvantage is being removed, and at a rate which the most hopeful spirit hardly dared to foretell. Reference has already been made to the Prime Minister's statement on this question in the House of Commons on August 20th. The air battles of recent weeks have given conclusive proof of the superior quality of British airmen and their machines, and the huge proportionate losses of the Germans have doubtless affected the enemy's offensive plans. Meanwhile, two million trained stalwart men stand ready in Britain to engage the Germans on land as soon as the order is given.

There are other factors abroad which will operate in our favour whenever an invasion of Germany is undertaken. The initial territorial gains of the Germans cannot be held for ever. Leaving, for the moment, all consideration of unrest in Abyssinia and other Italian problems out of the account (but they will come into the account when Germany begins to totter), one sees a continent of peoples waiting anxiously for the great moment of liberation from the Nazi yoke. They hate their present masters with an intensity that has few parallels in history. In Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, Norway, Holland, Belgium, France, and even in Austria, millions of men and women are ready, when the tocsin is sounded, to rise against the usurper and to do all in their power to rid their land once and for all of the vileness of Nazi rule. Even in Germany itself there are still some millions of people who are still loyal to liberal thought and who are awaiting deliverance from the hateful tyranny which has for so many years attempted to crush their free spirit.

In numbers, therefore, then, Britain and her Allies, and her potential Allies, have a preponderance over the Nazi Germans. To this potential and rising strength can be added the various forms of assistance which America is eager to assure to the cause of which that country is also a true representative.

Qualified and experienced observers of the present war are now almost unanimous in their opinion that the theories of General de Gaulle are the only right ones to be applied in this present age, and that victory on land—and it must be finished *on land*, will certainly go (other factors being equal) to the strongest and most powerful mechanised army. Edgar Ansel Mowrer, for one, who enjoys an international reputation as a profound observer and recorder of world events, recently wrote on this subject: “In September 1939 the French Army was found to be utterly inferior, not only in aeroplanes, but in anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns, *and in all-important tanks*—in precisely those arms on which the German success was ultimately founded. . . . In May and June of this year (1940) France was defeated by probably less than 100,000 German air, tank, infantry and artillery specialists. The proper spending by the French of £100,000,000 on modern aeroplanes, tanks and anti-aircraft and anti-tank guns, from 1937 to 1939, might have changed the entire outcome. . . . France’s safety before the war depended upon upholding the anti-German status of Central and Eastern Europe at *any* cost. . . . But for this an offensive army was necessary—a lightning-like army with terrific punch that could be well into Germany before the Germans got started. This army, small but mobile, consisting of tanks, motorized infantry and artillery and a superior air force was not—as many think—the outcome of the experience of the Spanish Civil War.

“It was conceived and entirely described as early as 1934 by a Major, now General Charles de Gaulle, in a volume entitled ‘Towards a Professional Army.’

"For his persistence in advocating such an army, de Gaulle was eliminated from active service and reinstated only when war began."

Following the break-through on the Western Front French Generals told Mr. Mowrer that with 1,000 more aeroplanes, 1,000 more tanks, and 3,000 more guns the Allies could have won. The Polish campaign demonstrated irrefutably, according to the American writer, the kind of new army which every country needed.

Looking into the future with his penetrating mind, General de Gaulle expresses the firm belief that the time is not far distant when the Germans, strung out over thousands of miles, will become war-weary and slack. Nature itself will sap the strength and the faith of these German hordes, far as they are from their own native environment and homes, and they will become exhausted and even fearful when they learn of the ever-growing power of the forces pitted against them.

"This," declares General de Gaulle, "this is the time when we must attack. But not with an expeditionary force of men in battle-dress with rifles at the slope.

*"Tanks and Guns.*

*"More Guns and more Tanks.*

*"Thousands of Aeroplanes.*

*"Tens of Thousands of Aeroplanes."*

That terse declaration sums up his views of the means and his faith in the possibility of a successful invasion of Germany.

That declaration is also a solemn warning to Britain that efforts in the production of this mechanical equipment must be made far beyond anything yet attempted; for it is only the thorough mechanisation of all the fighting forces that can give them the greatest possible striking power and the utmost mobility—hitherto the chief assets of the German army.

That general statement of desirable war policy, coming as it does from a military leader of such authoritative standing, should alone warrant the faith of the British public in the coming invasion of Germany, if only this country has provided itself with that overwhelming superiority of war machinery which General de Gaulle demands as an essential.

But the Free French leader has now gone further than such generalisations. He has given to the author of this book some very definite answers to three very direct questions concerning the invasion of Germany or of countries occupied by Germany. The opinions conveyed by those answers must have a most important bearing on the future course of the war.

Their utmost importance becomes all the more impressive when one reflects upon the unique position now occupied by General de Gaulle in the military world. Let it, then, be repeated that General de Gaulle is not only the foremost protagonist of the mobile mechanised force and of the policy of the offensive; he is the leader, accepted by his own people and recognised officially by the British Government, of the swelling Army of All Free Frenchmen; he is also the head of that New France which is arising out of the humiliation and suffering inflicted by the shameful capitulation of intriguing politicians and spineless military survivals of the last war. Such a man in such a position does not speak rashly. The answers he has given to the questions put to him present a very important and even prophetic picture of future events.

The questions were:

- (1) Is the invasion of a country, or countries, now occupied by Germany, or of Germany itself, feasible?
- (2) If so, is it, in the opinion of General de Gaulle, possible

rapidly to transport to the Continent, and in sufficient numerical strength, armoured divisions and mechanised forces to effect this invasion?

(3) What is the value, as an auxiliary arm, of parachutists for the invasion of Germany or of countries occupied by Germany?

The replies were:

Yes. The military invasion of the Continent is practicable if the offensive force possesses a naval and air superiority sufficient:

(a) to make sure of a deep bridge-head for transporting an advance-guard to territory well "prepared" by the Air Force;

(b) to guarantee continuity of transport and of supplies by sea and air.

There is, in any case, no doubt that, after a bridge-head has been established, the mechanised land forces (tank divisions), operating in conjunction with the Air Force, are alone capable of proceeding to the attack and of pursuing the offensive as occasion offers.

There is, further, no question that in order to establish a bridge-head and to continue the offensive the use of parachutists on a large scale is imperative.

Generally speaking, too, such operations are possible as soon as the enemy shows signs of becoming exhausted through the blockade or for other reasons.

The boldness and assurance of that statement of policy must give heart to all who long to see the cause of freedom prevail.

There are further encouraging signs that Britain is now fully awake to the urgent necessity of creating an all-powerful mechanised force, beyond anything which the Germans have yet attempted. Odd items

of news, such as that reported from New York recently to the effect that Britain, with American official approval, was planning to spend no less than £40,000,000 on 4,000 tanks to be built in American factories, lend support to that view and induce still greater confidence in the reassuring statements now frequently made by members of the British Government.

One may be entitled, therefore, to envisage the day, perhaps not so far distant, when tens of thousands of British fighters and bombers will darken the German skies, when, with the protection of the powerful Navy, a great fleet of transports will carry millions of men and many thousands of tanks as well as all the mechanism for the final great struggle against the Germans.

Thinking on those lines is not mere idle speculation. It is a state of mind necessary to the successful outcome of the war against a nation which has already learned the lesson of all modern campaigns. It is the line of thinking which the great military authority on modern warfare is pointing out to us to follow.

The destruction of the huge German Army is absolutely essential for the future peace of the world. We are prepared, as never before, for an invasion of Britain, though we now have growing cause to believe that it may never happen. We have thought long and hard on the invasion of our own country; we must now concentrate on an invasion of Germany. We must spend all our energy and, if necessary, all our money on making the attempt. And the attempts must continue so long as the Germans remain dominant and unconquered. It is no mere platitude to say that the future of the civilised world depends upon the coming successful invasion of Nazi Germany—the modern Moloch which demands, to sate its appetite, the sacrifice of *all* free peoples.

# This Second War of Independence: *A Call to Action*

by William S. Schlamm

**W**HY, with the world's greatest resources at their command, have the European democracies been impotent against the tide of Hitler's forces? This question, uppermost in the minds of all Americans today, is persuasively answered in a most penetrating and brilliant analysis of the misguided policies and practices of European democracies that have made them a fertile field for conquest.

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For years, thoughtful men and women have sounded warnings against the inner disintegration of democratic countries that have become increasingly unmindful of human needs and human values. The spiritual basis for democracy which flowed from the hearts and minds of the French philosophers of the 18th century to take root in the fibre of such Americans as Thomas Paine and Thomas Jefferson—the spiritual basis without which democracy ceases to exist—has steadily become obscured with the vast accumulation of wealth made possible by increased means of production.

This *Call to Action* should be required reading for every American—the best possible protection against those insidious attacks of Trojan Horse and Fifth Column activities which prepare the way for Hitler's conquest by the dissolution of the spiritual unity of freedom-loving peoples.

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# DE GAULLE AND THE COMING INVASION OF GERMANY...

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- William Knudson of the National Defense Advisory Commission, in an address before 200 American Mayors, made it clear that his commission saw its task as "arming for defense only." . . .
- The fallacy of preparedness for defense alone is brilliantly exploded in this important, timely book . . .
- Charles de Gaulle ★ is one of France's most brilliant generals, and leader of all free Frenchmen. He is best known throughout the world for his accurate predictions concerning the present war. It was *he* who first suggested the all-powerful, mechanized offensive-division with its co-ordinated tanks and dive-bombers (adopted by the Nazis as their Panzer Divisions—but scorned by the Old-school French General Staff, which preferred to rely on the Maginot Line and the purely defensive strategy!)
- While most of us have been thinking only of the threatened *invasion of England*, and of *England's defense*, General de Gaulle has been planning the eventual *invasion of Germany*!
- This book is a powerful brief for carrying the present war, once technical superiority is achieved, into the heart of Nazidom. Here de Gaulle not only describes the various ways in which Germany can be invaded, but also forcefully points out that (as every *military* man already knows) unless and until *Germany is invaded*, England cannot possibly win this war for the democracies.
- Here is the story of the famous French general who believes that given the proper equipment, the war can be carried into the enemy's country—that England can win—that France can rise again. Mechanized power, he says, whether terrestrial, aerial or naval, "would enable us to seize Germany's strongholds and bases, to expel her from the regions which she has already, or shall have captured, to blockade her, bombard her; in fact, to drive our weapons into her vitals from every side."
- Here is a fighting book, packed with the drama of these times, and written for Americans who want no false Maginot Line set up between their democratic institutions and the most unscrupulous and ruthless dictatorships mankind has ever known.

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★ Seven years ago, Charles de Gaulle, one of France's most distinguished generals, warned his country that it was not enough to sit comfortably behind the Maginot Line and wait for the Germans to attack; besides, said he, "those fortifications leave the whole of the Northern region exposed." The defense strategy, he insisted, in the face of a barrage of criticism from the rigid-thinking members of the French General Staff, "will defeat France."

★ General de Gaulle repeatedly demanded that the French Army be mechanized and motorized: "Tomorrow," said he in 1933, "the professional army will move entirely on caterpillar wheels. Every element of troops and services will make its way across the mountains and valleys in the appropriate vehicles. *Not a man, not a gun not a shell, not a piece of bread, will be transported in any other way.*"

★ This was his prophesy, in 1933: that the modern tank, "able to deliver a frontal attack under fire," would completely "upset the science of tactics"—that modern tanks, "holding from three to fifteen men who could not be hit behind their armour could race around the battlefield firing in all directions at a speed up to twenty-five miles an hour." Their crews protected from gas, their movements concealed by smoke-screens, in touch by radio with the rear, with other tanks and with aircraft, "they are indeed," he said, "the aristocrats of war."

★ The Germans seized upon de Gaulle's version of modern mechanized warfare and adopted it for their own purposes. Hitler's "Panzer Division" of 1940 is almost exactly, in make-up and in numbers, the "Armoured Division" proposed by de Gaulle for the French Army in 1933. The modern mechanized army (de Gaulle's dream for France), was used to crush Czecho-Slovakia, Poland and Norway, and finally was turned against his native land.

★ Again in January, 1940, General de Gaulle said: "The defender who limits himself to resisting in a fixed position with antiquated weapons is doomed to disaster . . . Massed air and land counter-attacks launched against an adversary more or less disorganized by his fortifications being pierced is the indispensable recourse of modern defense. Even if we make the frontier of our country the most advanced limit of our military action, we are still absolutely bound to create an instrument of shock manoeuvre and speed . . . In the present conflict . . . to be inactive is to be beaten."